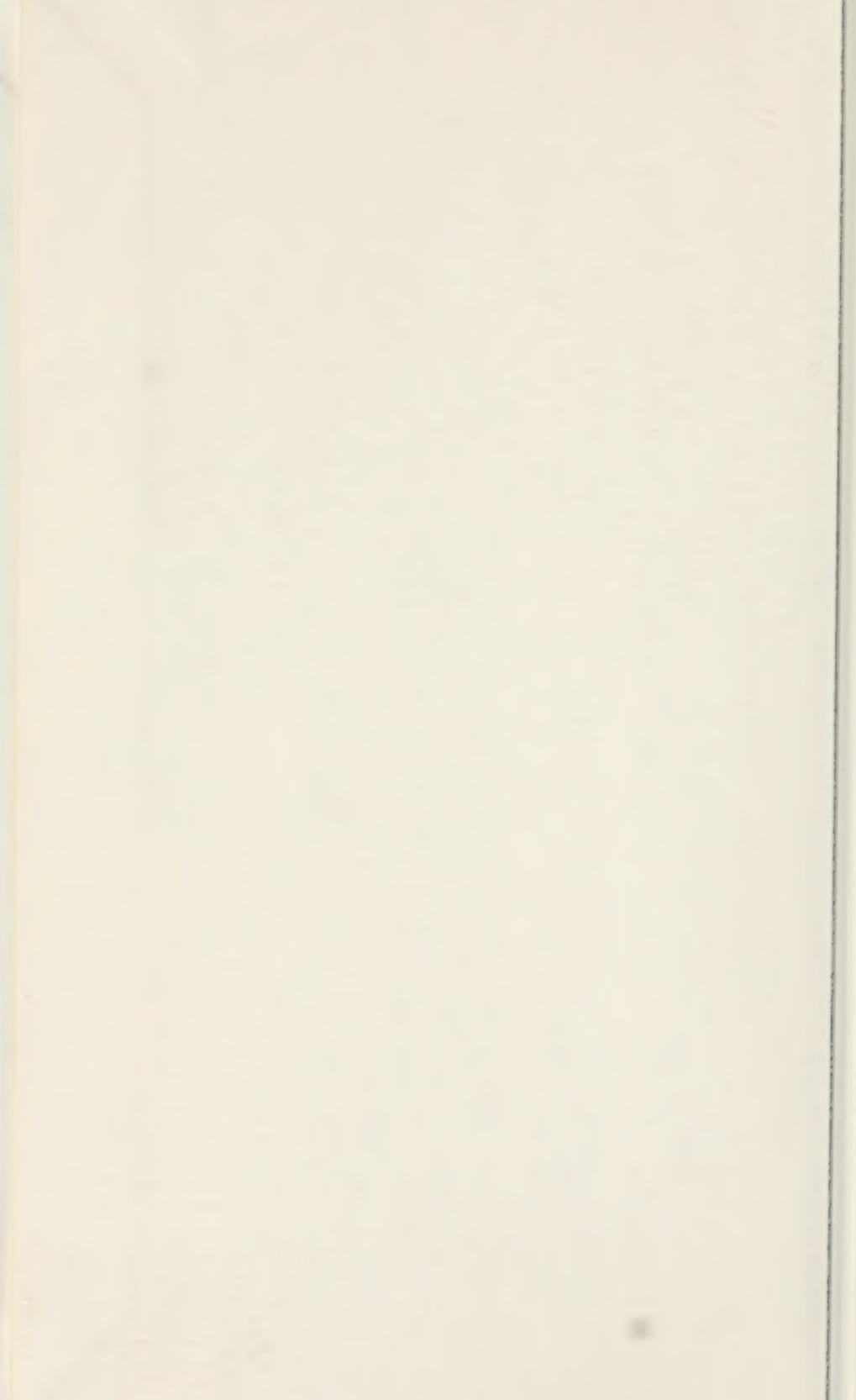
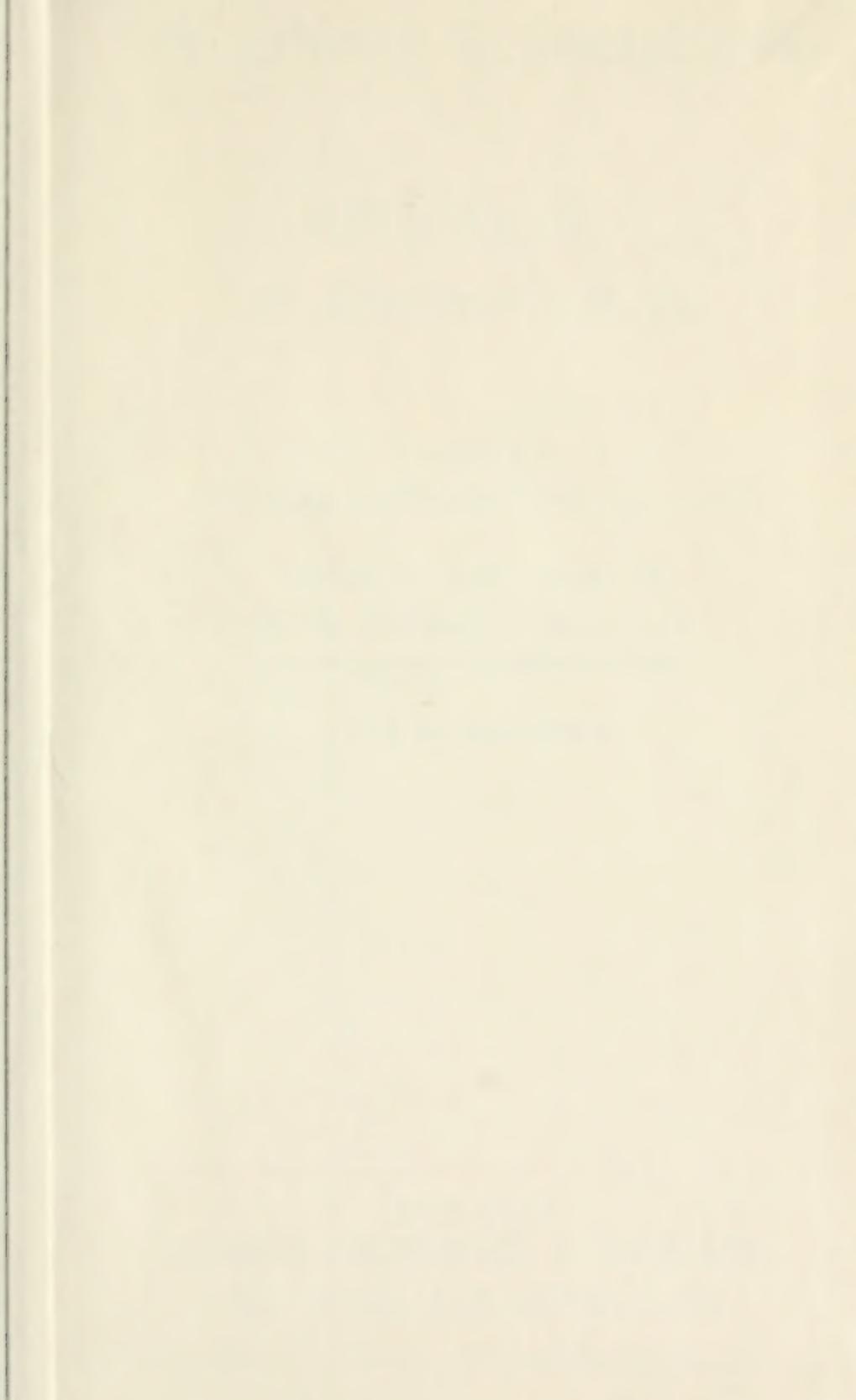


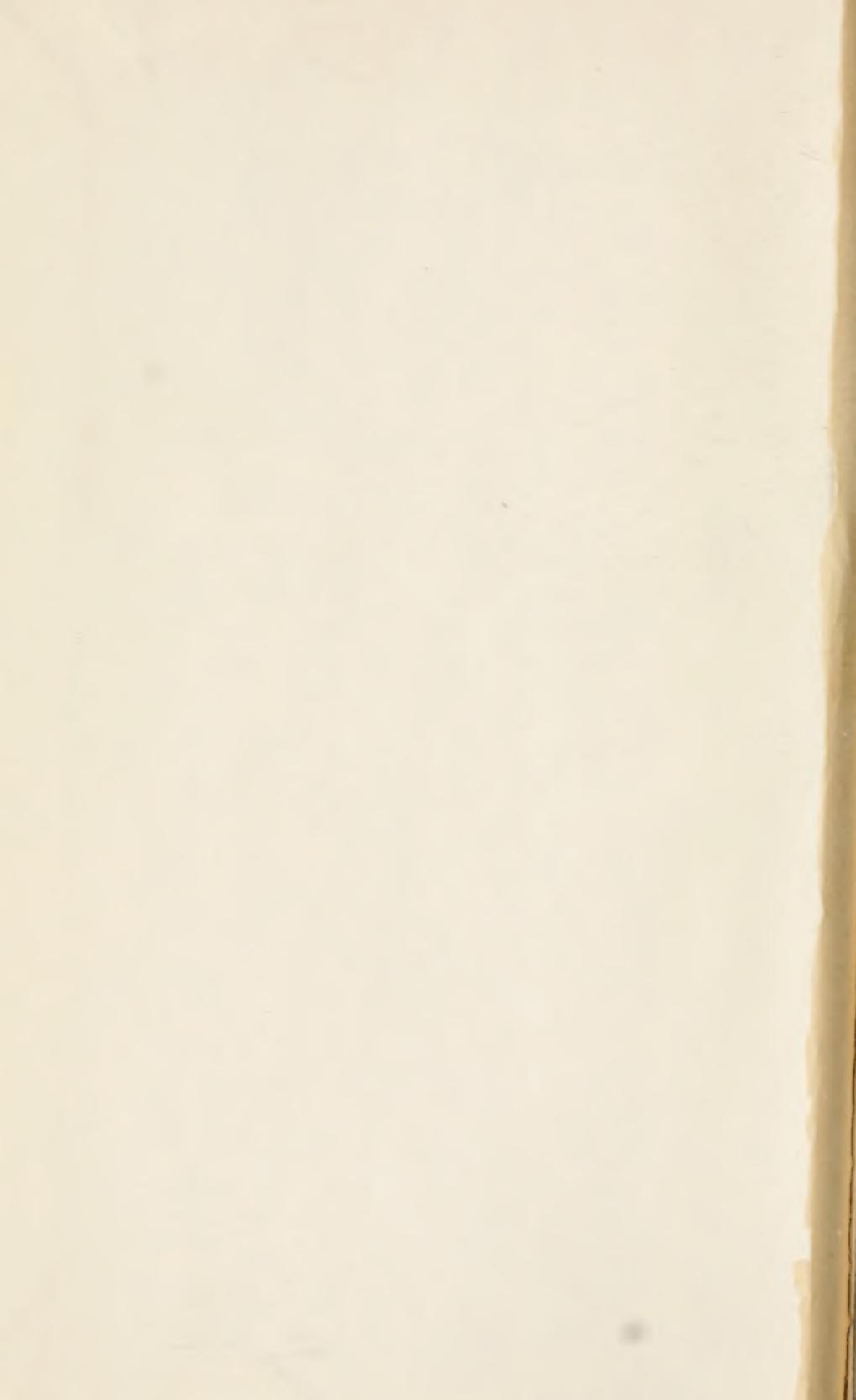
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01586429 1







Broadway Translations

HELIODORUS

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Translated by

THOMAS UNDERDOWNE (ANNO 1587)

Revised and partly rewritten by

F. A. WRIGHT, M.A. CAMB.

CLASSICAL DEPARTMENT, BIRKBECK COLLEGE

With an Introduction

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS LTD.

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

PA
3998
H2E5
1923



805069

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
BOOK I. THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT	7
,, 2. THE FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH	47
,, 3. THE FESTIVAL AT DELPHI	87
,, 4. THE STRANGE BIRTH	108
,, 5. THE PIRATE CHIEF	135
,, 6. THE WITCH OF BESSA	172
,, 7. THE WANTON PRINCESS	193
,, 8. CHARICLEA'S TRIAL	231
,, 9. THE GREAT BATTLE	258
,, 10. THE MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA	286

TO
FREDRIC J. WARBURG

*"There are those perchance who will think but lightly
of these imaginings : yet some folk deem a blood red
rose, or a lark's song, to be more precious than a king's
coronet."*

INTRODUCTION

HELIODORUS AND HIS ROMANCE

Of Heliodorus we know almost as little as we know of Homer. The story that he was the Christian bishop of Tricca, who held that see toward the end of the fourth century A.D., and being given the choice between his diocese and his book preferred the latter, is a pleasing fable now generally discredited. His date should probably be placed about the beginning of the third century of our era, and the only real facts in our possession concerning him are those given on the last page of his book : ‘ Here ends the history of the Ethiopian adventures of Theagenes and Chariclea written by Heliodorus, a Phoenician of Emesus, son of Theodosius, and descended from the Sun.’

But some slight pieces of internal evidence may be drawn from the *Aethiopica* itself. It is obvious that Heliodorus delights in very much the same sort of things as interested Herodotus ; natural science, military tactics, the habits and customs of strange tribes, the curious products of foreign lands. He has not, of course, the breadth of view that the great historian possesses, and he is a man of the study rather than of the world, but there is sufficient likeness between their two books to make a comparison reasonable. Plainly also, even if Heliodorus was not himself an Egyptian by descent, Egypt is the country that he

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

knows best and regards with the greatest affection. Father Nile plays as real a part in the story as the Wessex country does in Hardy's novels. 'The great river is, as it were, the chorus to the play, a witness to every incident, whether it happen at his mouth 'which is called Heracleot,' or by Syene and the cataracts, or in the mysterious land where he takes his beginning near distant Meröe.

The *Aethiopica* however derives its main interest, not from the personality of its author, but from the character of its composition. It is the first and remains one of the most successful of tales of adventure, depending not on grace of literary style, or on subtlety of character drawing, but rather on profusion of incident and elaboration of plot. In the richness of his invention and the dexterity of his narrative Heliodorus can give some useful lessons to our modern novelists, and in the skill wherewith he plans his tale he may be placed almost on a level with Homer and Virgil. The *Aethiopica* like the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* begins boldly in the middle of the story, then goes back with explanatory narratives which culminate in the centre of the book, and then works up slowly and gradually to the final climax. It is in the architecture of his plot that the strength of Heliodorus lies and he does not spend much effort on the creation of characters. Calasiris, it is true, is a life-like personality, perhaps drawn from the author himself, and Chariclea is a thoroughly satisfactory heroine; romantic, virtuous, beautiful, and in the recognition sense as skilful an advocate as Portia herself. But most of the other characters are types rather than individuals. The men are chiefly examples of excess or deficiency in the manly virtue of courage; Trachinus, Theagenes, Thyamis, Cnemon, Petosiris

HELIODORUS AND HIS STORY

going in a descending scale. The women in the same way exemplify the female virtue of chastity and its opposite, from Chariclea downwards to Persina, Thisbe, Demeneta, and Arsace. Heliodorus is not a psychologist, nor yet is he a stylist. His prose is quite adequate for its purpose, and that is about all that can fairly be said in its praise. In charm of language he stands in much the same relation to Longus as Sir Walter Scott does to Robert Louis Stevenson, or Balzac to such a conscious artist as Anatole France. You read Heliodorus for the story itself, not for the graceful way in which it is told. But for English people this comparative poverty of style is of no importance, for the Elizabethan, Thomas Underdowne, has all the qualities that Heliodorus lacks. His prose is full of rich colour and romantic vigour, as even his title page witnesses :

‘ An Aethiopian historie
written in Greeke by Heliodorus
no lesse wittie then pleasant
englisched by Thomas Underdowne and newly
corrected and augmented with divers and sundry
new additions by the said authour
whereunto is also annexed the argument of every
booke in the beginning of the same for the better
understanding of the storie.’

UNDERDOWNE'S TRANSLATION

In preparing this translation I have had before me always both the Greek text of Heliodorus in Hercher's edition and Underdowne's English version of 1587. Whenever possible, that is whenever he approximates with reasonable closeness to the meaning of the Greek, I have used Underdowne's own words, only so far altering as to bring them into accordance with modern spelling. 'Quiver' for example is always so written, while Underdowne is in delightful uncertainty as to whether 'quyver', 'guiver', 'guyver', are not equally admissible. I have removed also the many typographical errors which disfigure his printed text—'one' for 'our', 'longing' for 'lodging', 'at' for 'and', come on consecutive pages—and have tried to introduce a slightly more rational system of punctuation than that which Underdowne and his printers employ. But although I have usually kept his words, it has sometimes seemed best to change Underdowne's syntax and cut down the excessive length of his periods. Heliodorus himself, like most of the Greek prose writers, is inclined to a highly elaborate and involved structure; but Underdowne easily beats him on his own ground. A sentence of twenty-five lines and two hundred and fifty words offers no difficulty to our Elizabethan; to modern readers it is not so attractive. I have ventured therefore occasionally, with some reluctance, to break up his carefully arranged processions and substitute a simpler form.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

All this was fairly plain sailing : a more delicate problem was presented by the many passages where Underdowne totally fails to give the meaning of the Greek original. It is evident that he usually translates, not from the Greek, but from the Latin version of Warschewiczki published in 1551. That learned Pole knew vastly more Greek than our countryman ; but he was not impeccable, and wherever he goes astray Underdowne docilely follows. Often moreover the initial error is Underdowne's own, due to his very imperfect acquaintance even with Latin. Theagenes, for example, thinking he hears the ghost of Chariclea speaking says—*ηξω*—'I come to join you'. This in the Latin appears as 'veniam', in Underdowne as 'O sweet soul, pardon me'. Again, Chariclea fearing death puts her jewels—*ιπδ γυαστρερα*—in the Latin 'utero succinxit', in Underdowne 'she tied them in a bag.' Lastly, and more comically still, when the mole on Chariclea's arm is in the Greek compared to a spot of ebony on the ivory—*ελέφαιτα*—of her skin, Underdowne says : 'Chariclea uncovered her arme, and about it there, was in a manner, a mole, much like to the strakes that elephants have'. When we add to such errors as these the mistakes due to mere carelessness, 'one hundred' for 'one thousand', 'mother-in-law' for 'stepmother', 'old man' for 'old woman' and the constant omission of negatives, it will be seen that the reviser's task was no sinecure. But although Underdowne has little Latin and less Greek he is a superb master of English. I feel almost ashamed to point out his errors and can only hope that my poor attempts at correction will not have too ludicrous an effect, as patches of cheap white cotton upon an ancient robe of purple silk.

F. A. W.

THE FIRST BOOK

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

At the first smile of day, when the sun was just beginning to shine on the summits of the hills, men whose custom was to live by rapine and violence ran to the top of a cliff that stretched toward that mouth of the Nile which is called Heracleot. Standing awhile they viewed the sea underneath them, and when they had looked a good season afar off into the same, and could see nothing which could put them in hope of prey, they cast their eyes towards the neighbouring shore, where a ship lay moored, without sailors but full freighted: which thing they who were afar off might easily conjecture, for the cargo brought the water up to the ship's third loading line. But on the shore every place was full of men newly-slain, some quite dead, some half dead, some whose bodies yet panted and plainly declared that there had been a battle fought of late. There could be seen no signs or tokens of any just quarrel, but only some poor confused remnants of an unlucky banquet which had ended so. For the tables were furnished with delicate dishes, some whereof lay in the hands of those that were slain, having served as weapons in the battle so suddenly begun. Others covered such as had crept under them to hide themselves, as they thought. Besides the cups were overthrown and fallen from the hands, either of them that drank, or those who had

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

instead of stones used them. For that sudden mischief wrought new devices, and taught them in stead of weapons to use their pots. Of those who lay there, one was wounded with an axe, another was hurt with the shells of fishes, whereof on the shore there was great plenty, another was battered with a club, many burnt by fire, and the rest by divers other means, but most of all were slain with arrows. To be brief, God shewed a wonderful sight in so small a space, imbruining wine with blood, joining battle with banqueting, mingling indifferently slaughters with drinking, and killing with quaffings, providing such a sight for the thieves of Egypt to gaze at. For they, when they had looked upon these things a good while from the hill, could not understand what that sight meant, forasmuch as they saw some slain there, but the conquerors could they see nowhere, a manifest victory but no spoils taken away, a ship without mariners only but as concerning other things untouched, as if she had been kept with a guard of many men and lay at road in a peaceful harbour.

But though they knew not what the thing meant, they still had regard for gain, and deeming themselves to be victors hurried with all speed to seize their booty. They were but a little way from the ship when they saw a sight more perplexing than the rest a great deal. A maid endowed with excellent beauty, who almost might be supposed a goddess, sat upon a rock, seeming not a little to be grieved with that present mischance, but for all that of excellent courage. She had a garland of laurel on her head, a quiver on her back; to her left shoulder a bow was fastened and her left arm hung carelessly down. Her right elbow she rested upon her thigh holding her cheek in her hand, looking downward, without moving her head,

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

beholding a certain young man who lay before her, the which was sore wounded and seemed to lift up himself, as if he had been awakened out of a dead sleep, almost of death itself : yet was he in this case of singular beauty, and although his cheeks were besprinkled with blood, his whiteness did appear so much the more. He was constrained for grief to close his eyes, but the sight of the maiden drew them towards her, and they must needs see, because they saw her. As soon as he came to himself he heaved a deep sigh and uttered these words very faintly ‘ And art thou safe indeed my sweetheart ? ’ quoth he. ‘ Or hast thou by thy death augmented the slaughter ? Canst thou not endure even after death to be separated from me that now a vision of thy spirit haunts this place of trouble ? ’ ‘ Nay ’ , answered the maid, ‘ on you doth all my estate depend for good or ill, and for this cause, you see ’ —showing a knife in her hand—‘ this has hitherto been waiting, and only by the chance of your recovery was restrained.’

As soon as she had said thus, she leaped from the stone, and they who were on the hill, as well for wonder, as also for the fear they had, as if they had been stricken with lightning, ran every man to hide them in the bushes there beside. For she seemed to them a thing of greater price, and more heavenly, when she stood upright, and her arrows with the sudden moving of her body gave a clash on her shoulders, her apparel wrought with gold glistened against the sun, and her hair under the garland, blown about with the wind, covered a great part of her back. The thieves were greatly afraid ; and even more than what they saw did their ignorance of what had happened before terrify them. Some of them said indeed it was a

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

goddess—Artemis, or Isis the lady of the land—others declared it was a priestess of the gods who, replenished with divine fury had made the great slaughter which there appeared. And they every man gave his verdict, because they knew not yet the truth. But she, hastily running to the young man, embraced him, wept for sorrow, kissed him, wiped away his blood, and made pitiful moan, scarcely believing that she held him in her arms. Which things when the Egyptians had seen they turned their opinions : ‘ And are these’, said they, ‘ the works of a goddess ? ; Would a goddess kiss a dead man with such compassion ? ’ They determined therefore with themselves that it was best to take heart of grace, and draw near to find out the truth. When they had therefore encouraged each other a little, they ran down, and found the maid busy in dressing the young man’s wounds, and coming behind her suddenly stood still, and durst neither speak nor do anything more for their lives.

When she heard the noise around her, and their shadows before her eyes, she lifted herself up a little and looked back ; but then at once stooped down again, no whit dismayed by the strange colour of their skin nor yet abashed to see the thieves in harness, but applying herself only to bind up his wounds that lay before her. Such is the force of earnest desire and true love ; it despiseth all outward chances, be they pleasant or otherwise, only beholding that which it loveth, and thereabout bestoweth all diligence and travail. But when the thieves passed by and stood before her, and seemed as though they would enterprise somewhat, she lifted herself up again, and beholding them black and ill favoured said :—‘ If you be the spirits of those who are slain here, you

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

trouble us wrongfully, for most of you were slain by your own hands : as for us, if we slew any, we did it but in our own defence to repel the violence which was proffered to my virginity. But if you be men alive, it seemeth you are thieves and you have come here in good season : rid us, I pray, from these present miseries and by death finish this our unhappy tragedy.' Thus did she sorrowfully lament. But they, not understanding what she said, left them there, accounting their weakness a sufficient guard, and hastened to the ship, and brought out that which was in the same, paying no regard to other things, whereof therein was great store, but every man bearing out as much as he could of gold, silver, precious stones, and silk. And when they thought they had enough, and there was such plenty as might satisfy even a thief's greed, laying their booty on the shore they fell to dividing it into portions such as they could carry, not according to the worth and value of what they had, but contenting themselves with equality of weight. As for the young man and the maid, they would take order for them afterward.

In the meantime another company of thieves, whereof two horsemen were captains, came toward them : which thing as soon as those saw that had been there before, having no courage to oppose them, they ran away as fast as they could, without taking with them any part of the prey, that they might give their enemy no occasion to pursue them. For they were in number but ten, and those who came upon them were three times as many. And so the maid and her companion, though not yet prisoners, were again in durance. But the robbers, although they were eager for the spoil, yet, partly because they knew not what

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

those things signified which they saw, and partly also for fear, stayed themselves a while, thinking that the former slaughter had been made by the thieves that had been there before. But when they beheld the maid in her fine foreign dress, who despised the dangers that hung over her head as if they had been none, and altogether employed her care to ease the young man's wounds, taking his grief as heavily as her own sorrow, they not only marvelled at her beauty and high spirit, but were wonderfully moved by the comeliness of the wounded man's person. Such was the seemliness of his countenance and tallness of his stature, as he lay before them. For by this time he was a little mended and his person had recovered its old handsomeness again. At length after they had beheld them a good while, and he drew near who was their master, he laid hand on the maid and bade her arise and follow him. She, although she understood not what he said, conjecturing what he wished her to do, drew the young man with her himself holding her fast, and pointing with a knife to her breast threatened that she would kill herself if they carried them not away both together. Which thing when the master, partly by her talk but more plainly by her gesture understood, hoping also to use the young man's help in great affairs when he recovered, he alighted himself from his horse and commanded his harness-bearer likewise so to do, and set his prisoners upon them. Then, ordering the rest when they had gathered up the prey to follow them, he himself like a lackey ran by their side and stayed them upright, if by reason of their infirmity they were likely to fall. Surely this deed was not without glory; for he who was their master now waited upon them, and he who took them prisoners was content to serve them. Such is the

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

impression that nobility makes, and such the force of comeliness, which can subdue the disposition of thieves and bring under the wild and savage.

When they had gone about two furlongs by the seaside, they moved straight toward the crest of the hill, and left the sea on their right hand. And having with difficulty gone over the top of the said hill, they hastened to a pool that lay on the other side thereof, the manner whereof was thus. The whole place is called by the Egyptians The Pasture Land, about the which is a low valley which receiveth certain exundations of the Nile, by means whereof it becomes a pool, and is in the midst very deep, while about its brims are marshes or fens. For look, as the shore is to the sea, so are the fens to every great pool. In that place have the thieves of Egypt, however many they be, their commonwealth. And as there is but little land above the water, some live in small cottages, others in boats, which they use as well for their house as for passage over the pool. In these do their women serve them and, if need require, be also brought to bed. When a child is born, they let him suck his mother's milk a while; but afterwards they feed him with fishes taken in the lake and roasted in the hot sun. And when they perceive that he begins to go, they tie a cord about his ankles and suffer him only to crawl the length of the boat or the cottage, teaching him even at the first after a new fashion to go by a halter. Many a herdsman is born and bred in the pool, which he accounts to be his country and a sufficient defence for the safety of the thieves. And for that cause all such people flock thither, for they all do use the water instead of a wall. Moreover the great plenty of weeds that growtheth there in the moozy

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

ground is as good as a bulwark unto them. For by devising many crooked and cumbrous ways, through which the passages to them by frequent use are very easy but to others hard, they have made it a sure defence, so that by no sudden invasion they may be endamaged. And thus much as touching the Lake, and those rogues that inhabit the same.

About the sun setting cometh home the captain with all his retinue. Then took they the young couple from their houses and laid their prey aboard certain boats, and the rest of the robbers that tarried at home, who were a great number, ran to meet the captain from out of every part of the fen, and welcomed him as if he had been their king. But when they considered the multitude of the spoils that they had won, and saw the beauty of the maid to be so heavenly a thing, they guessed that their companions had robbed some temple, and that they had brought away the priestess of the goddess, or rather the lively picture of the goddess herself. Thus in their simplicity did they conjecture from the maid. And therefore they congratulated their captain in hearty wise for his valiant exploit, and so escorted him to his own house, which was an island far from the rest, separated for his own use and for a few others who most commonly used to keep him company. Whither after he was brought, he commanded the others to depart, every man to his own house, charging them the next day all to wait upon him. He himself with a few others that tarried with him, after they had made a short supper, delivered the young folks to the custody of a Grecian whom he had taken a few days before, that he might be their interpreter, letting them have a corner of his own house not far from his lodging, with commandment as well diligently to see to the wounded young

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

man as anxiously to look to the maid, that she by no means should be annoyed. Then, what with his former travel the day before, and also with care of his present affairs, he fell asleep.

When all was whist in the marsh and the time of the first night watch had come, the maid took that occasion and absence of tumultuous men to be a fit time to lament and wail ; and the rather for that in the night she could neither see nor hear anything that might comfort her, but contrarwaise move her to sorrow. When therefore with herself secretly she had wailed alone (for she was by the captain's commandment separated from company and laid in a simple bed) and wept very bitterly—' Apollo', said she, ' how much more grievous punishment dost thou take of us than we have deserved. Hast thou not been sufficiently revenged on us in the past ? Forasmuch as we are far from our friends and kinsfolk, and that we were taken by pirates and subject to six hundred dangers more by sea, but that now again we must on the land fall into the hands of thieves and robbers : beside, who knoweth whether anything worse is like to light upon us ? When wilt thou make an end ? If it be in death that shall be void of injury, oh that death would like me well ! But rather than any man should filthily know me, which Theagenes never did, surely with a halter I would end my life, reserving myself pure and chaste, as hitherto I have done, even unto death and thereby gain a beautiful epitaph for my singular virginity, and no judge shall be so cruel as thou '. While she spake thus Theagenes willed her to be content, and said : ' Mine own dear heart and only joy, Chariclea, cease your mourning. I know you have just cause to complain, but in your thus

doing you displease God a great deal more than you think. Neither have we any need to provoke God to wrath, but rather to pray : for that which is mightier must with prayers and not with accusation be appeased. ‘ You give me indeed good counsel,’ quoth she, ‘ but I pray you, tell me how you fare.’ ‘ Better,’ said he, ‘ than I did yesternight, since this young man trimmed my wounds, whereby the burning heat of them is well cooled. ‘ Yea,’ quoth he who had the charge to look to them, ‘ in the morning you shall see they shall be in better case, for I will provide such a herb for you that within three dressings your wound shall be healed. And this I have proved true by experience ; for if any that were under this captain since I was taken prisoner in any conflict happened to be wounded, he never needed many days to be cured. You need not marvel that I am greatly moved with your estate, for you seem to be in as ill case as I ; and I have the more compassion on you, since you are Grecians and I myself also am a Grecian born.’ ‘ A Grecian, O immortal God,’ cried they out suddenly for joy, ‘ a Grecian indeed both in tongue and country. Hereafter we trust to have some respite from our mishaps.’ ‘ But what must we call you ? ’ said Theagenes. ‘ Cnemon’ answered he. ‘ Of what part of Greece ? ’ said Theagenes. ‘ Of Athens’ answered he. ‘ And how came you here ? ’ said Theagenes. ‘ Peace, I pray you :’ quoth he, ‘ and ask me that question no more. Let us leave that to such as write tragedies. I would not wish at this time to increase your sorrows by repeating mine. Besides, the night is so far spent that the rest would not serve to tell you the same, especially as you need rest and sleep after your troubles.’ But when they would not cease, but were still very instant to have him tell his

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

story, accounting it a great comfort to hear any man have as ill luck as they had themselves, Cnemon began in this sort.

' My father's name was Aristippus ; he was born at Athens, one of the upper senate, as rich as any commoner in the city. He, after the decease of my mother, applied his mind to marry again, being loth to risk all his hopes of posterity on one only child. He doth therefore bring home a little woman somewhat fine, but passing malicious, named Demeneta. As soon as she was married, she claimed my father all to her own lure and made him do what she list, enticing the old man with her beauty. In many other points too she was very curious, for if ever any woman knew how to make a man mad of her, she was better skilled in that art than any man would think. When my father went forth she would be sorrowful, and run to him when he came home and blame him much for his long tarrying, and not stick to tell him that she would have died if he had tarried never so little longer. At every word would she embrace him and moist her kisses with tears ; with which means my father was so bewitched that he never was well but when he either had her in his arms or else was looking at her. Above all else, she would ever have me in her sight, as if I had been her own son ; by this means also making Aristippus to love her the better. Sometimes she would kiss me, oftentimes she would wish that she might pastime herself with me, wherewith I was well content, mistrusting nothing less than what she intended and marvelling that she bare such a motherly affection toward me. But when she came to me more wantonly and her kisses were more hot than

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

beseemed an honest woman and her countenance passed modesty, then many things caused me to suspect her, so that I conveyed myself away and would not regard her fair words. I will let other things pass, which would be too long to tell, by what means she went about to win me, what proffers she made, how sometimes she would call me ‘her pretty boy,’ sometimes ‘her sweet heart,’ then ‘her heir,’ and then ‘her own life,’ and how to these fair names she would add many enticements with especial consideration to what I liked best : so that in grave affairs she would behave herself like my mother, but if she list to dally then would she manifestly declare her love.

At length such a chance befell, when the high feast of Pallas was celebrated, on which the Athenians were accustomed to consecrate a ship by land. I, for I was not then sixteen years old, had sung the usual hymn of her praise, and done other rites and ceremonies due to the same, and came home attired in my robes and my crown on my head. As soon as she saw me she was distraught of her wits and not able with policy to cover her love any longer, but for very desire ran to me and took me in her arms and said : ‘O my young Hippolytus and my dear Theseus.’ In what case was I then, think you, who even now am ashamed to tell you the same. That night my father supped at the castle, and as often happened in such company and public resort he determined to lie there all night ; that night she came to me and strived to have an unlawful thing at my hand. But I with all my power withstood her, and regarded neither her flattering words, nor fair promises, no, nor her threatenings : wherefore, fetching a sigh from the bottom of her heart, for that time she departed ; but within two nights after, like a mischievous quean,

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

she sought all means possible to entrap me. First of all she kept her bed, and when my father came home and asked her how she fared, made no answer but said she was sick. When he became importunate and desired to know what she ailed—‘That goodly young man,’ said she, ‘son to us both, whom I—the gods know—loved even more than you, when he perceived by certain signs that I was great with child by you—which thing I concealed from you until I knew the certainty myself—and waiting for your absence, when I counselled him, as my manner was, and persuaded him to leave haunting of harlots and too much drinking—which things I knew well enough, but would never tell you of them, lest thereby I should incur the cruel suspicion of a stepmother with you—while, I say, I talked with him of these things, alone, no more but he and I, lest he should be ashamed—I will not tell the worst, for I am abashed so to do, nor in what manner he insulted both you and me—he lastly spurned me on the belly, and hath caused me to be in such case as you see.’

As soon as my father heard this, he said nothing, nor asked me any questions, neither gave me leave to speak for myself ; but persuading himself that she, who loved me so well, would by no means traduce me, as soon as he found me in a certain corner of the house, boxed me with his fists, and calling his servants together scourged me with rods, and would not suffer me to know—which all men do—why I was cruelly beaten. When his anger was cooled, I said to him : ‘Father, now at length I pray you tell me why I have had thus many stripes.’ At this the more incensed —‘O the dissembler’ he cried ‘he wants to learn from me of his own misdeeds’ : and with that he turned away and hastened back to Demeneta. But she

was not yet content, and devised this other trick against me. She had a maid called Thisbe who could play well on the harp, and was otherwise fair, and a very proper wench. Her she made a stale for me and commanded her to love me, and by and by she did so indeed. Before this oftentimes, when I had attempted her, she had refused ; but now she allured me with countenance, becks, and many other signs. In my foolishness I thought I had become beautiful of a sudden, and one night, when she came to my bed, thought no scorn to make her room. She liked her entertainment so well that she came again, and continually haunted my bed. At length when I gave her counsel to use circumspection in this matter, and take heed that her mistress found her not with me : 'Cnemon,' said she, 'you seem to be too simple : you count it a dangerous matter for me, a bond servant bought with money, to be taken a bed with you ; but what punishment, think you, does she deserve, who, professing herself a free woman and lawfully married to a husband and knowing that the penalty of her transgression, is death, yet playeth the naughti-pack.' 'Peace' said I, 'I cannot believe that.' 'Nay,' said she, 'if you will, I will deliver the adulterer to you, even in the deed doing.' 'If you will do so,' quoth I, 'you shall do me a pleasure.' 'With all my heart,' said she, 'not only for your own sake who have been injured by her before, but for mine also who, since she hath me in jealousy, am used by her very extremely. Wherefore, if you be a man, apprehend him.' I promised her I would do so, and she for that time went her way.

About three nights after she came and waked me out of my sleep, and told me that an adulterer was come in and that my father upon occasion suddenly

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

was gone into the country, and he, according to appointment, was gone to bed to Demeneta : therefore it was expedient for me to haste to be revenged, and put on my sword that the knave might not escape. I did so, and taking a dagger in my hand followed Thisbe, who had before lit a torch, and went to the bed chamber. When I came near and perceived the glimmering of a light through the slivers, and the door locked, in my fury and anger I burst down the door and ran in crying out : “ Where is that villain, the worthy lover of this chaste dame ? ”

And with the words I rushed upon them, in mind to slay them both. But it was my father—O god—who leapt out of the bed and falling at my knees before me said : ‘ My son wait a while, have pity upon thy father ; spare his white hairs that have brought thee up. We have done thee wrong indeed, yet not so great that therefore with death thou shouldest be revenged on me. Give not so much to thy wrath, neither by thy father’s blood imbrue thy hands.’ This, with much more, spake my father, humbly upon his knees, desiring me to save his life. But I, as if I had been stricken with a thunderbolt, stood still amazed and looked round about after Thisbe who had, I know not how, conveyed herself away. I gazed at the bed and my eyes wandered all over the room. I had no word to say, nor could I tell what was best to do. My sword fell out of my hands, which Demeneta straightway caught up, and my father then out of danger laid hands upon me and commanded me to be bound, Demeneta in the mean while moving many ways and setting him on. ‘ Did I not tell you this before,’ cried she ; ‘ that it was best to look to the princocks ; which would no doubt if time served attempt somewhat.’ I saw the look on his face and

knew what he meant. My father answered : ‘ You told me indeed but I believed you not.’

Thus was I in bonds, and he would not give me leave to tell him how the matter was handled. As soon as it was day, he brought me, bound as I was, before the people, and strewing ashes on his head said : ‘ I brought not up my son, ye men of Athens, to see him come to this end, but trusting he would be a staff to stay my age upon. As soon as he was born I brought him up gentlemanlike and set him to school, and when I had well placed him among our kinsfolk and written him in the number of other young men his equals, I made him one of our citizens according the laws of this city. On him I have made all my doubtful hopes depend. But he has not only forgotten all these things but also diversely injured me, and beaten this woman who according to our law is my second wife. At length he came to me by night with a sword in his hand, and was no farther from being a parricide but that Fortune hindered him, and by a sudden fear the sword fell out of his hand. I flee to you and tell you thereof. And although by the law I might with my own hand slay him, yet I would not : therefore remit I my whole cause to your discretion, thinking that I shall do better if I punish my son rather by public law than by private bloodshed.’ And therewithal he wept, as did Demeneta also, feigning herself to be very sorry for my mishap and calling me an unhappy creature, as well she might, being in danger to die before my natural time, whom evil spirits had stirred against my parents. Not only did she lament but testified with her tears, and as though her accusation had been true, with weeping she confirmed the same. When I craved license to speak for myself, the scribe came to me and propounded this straight

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

question, whether I came to my father, or not, with a sword in my hand. ‘I did,’ quoth I, ‘but I will tell you how.’ Thereupon every man cried out and said that I ought not to speak for myself : some judged me worthy to be stoned to death, others to be hanged, others to be cast headlong down into the pit. All the while they were consulting of my punishment I was crying : ‘O my cruel stepmother ! Alas, for my stepmother’s sake am I thus troubled. My stepmother killeth me without judgment :’ and many marked my words very well and began to suspect the truth. But for all that, at the time I could not get a hearing ; such was the tumult and noise of the people. When the votes were reckoned, those who condemned me to die were a thousand seven hundred, whereof the one half would have me stoned, the other cast into the pit : the rest, of whom there were about a thousand, crediting somewhat the suspicion they had conceived of my stepmother, gave sentence that I should be banished for ever. Yet these prevailed ; for though they were fewer than the whole number of the others, yet since the others differed, on the reckoning a thousand was the greater number : and thus was I banished from my father’s house and native country. But for all that the accursed woman Demeneta did not go unpunished. How, you shall hereafter know ; but now we must fall to sleep, for it is far into the night and you have need of rest in plenty !

‘Nay,’ said Theagenes, ‘you will vex us still more, if you leave the story with that mischievous creature unpunished.’ ‘Since you will needs know,’ said Cnemon, ‘give ear. I, in such case as I was after the judgment, came to the Piraeus, and finding a ship ready to depart sailed to Aegina, for I knew I had some kinsfolk there, by my mother’s side. When I

arrived there and had found those I sought for, at the first I lived pleasantly enough : about a twenty days after, roaming about as I was wont to do, I walked down to the haven, and behold, a barque was within kenning. I stayed there a little, and devised with myself whence that barque should come and what manner of people should be in her. The bridge was scarce down when one leaped out and ran and embraced me—his name was Charias one of my companions—and said : ‘ Cnemon, I bring thee merry tidings ; now art thou well revenged upon thine enemy; Demeneta is dead.’ ‘ Welcome ! Charias ’ said I ; ‘ but why do you scant this joyful news, as though it were some disaster you were telling ? Recount, I pray you, the manner of this revenge ; for I fear much that she died as other folk do, and escaped the death she deserved.’ ‘ Justice ’ quoth Charias, ‘ hath not utterly forsaken us, as Hesiod imagined. But although she wink a while upon the misdeeds of men and prolong the revenge a good season, yet at length she casteth a terrible eye upon such offenders, who also hath taken just punishment of the mischievous Demeneta. And in all this nothing was either said or done, whereto by Thisbe, for our old acquaintance sake, I was not made privy. After thine unhappy father had procured thine unjust banishment, repenting of what he had done he conveyed himself to a solitary manor of his, away from the company of men, and there lived, eating his heart out, as the proverb hath it. As for her, she was tormented by the Furies and loved thee absent with a madder passion, neither at any time ceased she from sorrow, as though she lamented thy chance, but rather in truth her own mishap. Day and night she would cry—‘ O Cnemon, my pretty boy,’—calling thee her own life and soul

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

in so much that when women of her acquaintance came to visit and comfort her, they wondered greatly that she, a stepmother, should bear such motherly affection toward thee. She would make them answer that it was a greater grief to her than any comfortable words could assuage, and that few of them knew what a cruel stab it was to her heart. Whenever she came to herself again, she would accuse Thisbe, in that she had not served her well : ‘ Oh, how ready thou art to do mischief,’ she would say, ‘ who hast not helped me now in my love, but rather caused me to lose, in the turning of a hand almost, my dearest joy, without giving me any time to change my mind ’ : and therewith she gave manifest tokens that she meant to do her some harm.

So Thisbe, perceiving her to be very wroth and almost overcome with sorrow and prepared to do some great mischief to her, being set on as well by anger as by love, determined to prevent her ; and by beguiling her to provide for her own safety. Wherefore she entered in to her and said : ‘ What ado is this, mistress ? Why do you accuse thus your maid who for my part have always heretofore done, and even now also did as you commanded me. If anything happened not according to your mind, you must ascribe that to fortune, and if now also you will command me to devise some remedy for your present sorrow, you will easily perceive you shall not want my good will.’ ‘ What remedy,’ replied she, ‘ can be found, seeing that he who could give comfort is by distance of place separated from me, while the un-hoped for leniency of those that gave sentence on him hath brought to me destruction ? If he had been stoned and quite done to death, then also in me had been quenched and dead the blazing flames of my

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

burning desire. For that whose hope is past is taken from the heart, and that which is looked for no more causeth grieved minds to intermit all manner of sorrow. Now methinketh I see him and as though he were present hear him, how he casteth in my teeth the unjust guiles that I ensnared him with, as a thing shamefully done, so that I blush to speak to him. Sometimes methinketh he comes toward me, and I shall enjoy him : sometimes I determine to go toward him, in whatever coast of the world it be. These things set me on fire ; these things make me mad. But, o ye gods, I have as I deserve. Why did I not rather with good will seek to win him than by craft to compel him ? Why did I not humbly pray him rather than like an enemy persecute him ? He would not take me at the first, and for good reason ; I was another man's. He feared to defile his father's bed ; but haply either by time or by fair words he might have been allured to be more gentle unto me. But I, savage and cruel that I am, as though I loved no man but had authority to compel him, because he obeyed me not at the first and despised Demeneta whom in beauty he far excelled, have committed a heinous crime. But, O my sweet Thisbe, what is this remedy that thou sayest is easy ? ' ' Mistress,' quoth the maid, ' many men think that Cnemon is gone out of the city and territory of Athens, as he was judged to do. But I know well enough, who have searched all things narrowly for your sake, that he keepeth himself secretly in a certain place near the city. You have heard doubtless of the flute-girl Arsinoe. With her he was acquainted before, and after his mishap the maid took him in, promised to go away with him, and keepeth him at her house until she can provide all things ready for her journey.'

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

'O happy Arsinoe,' said Demeneta, 'both for the former acquaintance she had with Cnemon and for the banishment which she shall have with him! But how do these things touch us?' 'Greatly, mistress,' said she. 'I will say I love Cnemon, and will desire Arsinoe, with whom by reason of her trade I have been long familiar, that she should in her stead suffer me to lie with him one night. Which if I shall obtain, it shall be yours, and he shall think you to be Arsinoe, and in her place shall you be with him. And I will provide also that when he goes to bed he shall have drunk a little; and if you get what you desire, then it may well be that your passion will be assuaged. For in many women the flame of love is quenched at the first experiment, and a full fruition brings with it satiety. And if your passion even then remain—which God forbid—then we will make, as the proverb says, a new voyage and seek a new way. In the meantime let us apply that which the present opportunity permitteth.'

Demeneta allowed and praised this well, and begged her not to slack this determination at all. She craved of her mistress but one day to bring it about, and went to Arsinoe and asked her if she knew not Teledemus. She answered, 'yes.' 'Let us have a chamber,' quoth the other, 'for I have promised him this night. He will come first, and I will follow as soon as I have brought my mistress to bed.' This done, she went into the country to Aristippus and said to him thus: 'Master, I come to you to accuse myself, and am ready to take such punishment at your hand as your discretion shall think good. By me you have lost your son, not willing indeed so to do, yet of truth a helper in the same. For when I perceived that my mistress lived not well but was

injurious to your bed, fearing not only that I myself should have some shrewd turn, if the matter came to light, for keeping her counsel, but especially sorrowful for your mishap, who for loving your wife so entirely should have such recompense, daring not myself to tell you of it I came one night, that no man should know thereof, and told my young master that there was one who used to play the harlot with my mistress. He thinking that there was a man with her in bed—for he was vexed before by her, as you know well enough—took his sword in his hand very angry, and not esteeming that I said that then there was no one but supposing rather that I had repented me of betraying her, ran like a madman to your bed's side : what followed you know. To-day you have an opportunity, if you wish, to clear yourself as regards your son, though he be in banishment, and to take vengeance on her who has done you both wrong. I will show you this night Demeneta lying with her paramour, and that too in another man's house outside the city.' 'If,' said Aristippus, 'thou wilt show me this, I will make thee free ; and I myself may revive again, if I be revenged on mine enemy. I have been grieved about the same in my conscience a great while, yet for all that, though I suspected no less, because I could not convince it by manifest proofs, I held myself content. But what must I do ?' 'You know,' quoth she, 'the garden wherein remaineth the monument of the Epicureans : come thither a little before night, and tarry for me.' When she had said this she returned, and coming again to Demeneta—' Make ready yourself,' said she ; 'you must be fine ; all that I have promised you is done.' She apparelléd herself, and did as Thisbe commanded her, and when the evening was come she carried her to the place as was

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

appointed. When they came near the house, she told her to stay a while, and went in herself before, and desired Arsinoe to go aside into another house and let all things be quiet; for she said the young man was somewhat shamefast, being but of late inured to Venus' sports. The other agreed, and returning she took Demeneta, and brought her in, and laid her in bed, and took the light away—lest you, forsooth, should know her, who were then here in Aegina—and told her to take her pleasure and say nothing; ‘and I,’ said she, ‘will fetch the young man in to you, for he is making merry hereby.’ Then she went forth and found Aristippus at the place appointed, and urged him now to catch the adulterer and bind him fast. He followed her, and when they were come to the house scarcely finding the bed by reason of the moon’s faint light, he cried: ‘I have thee now, O thou much hated of the gods.’ While he spake thus, Thisbe ran to the doors, and made them give as great a crash as she could, and cried out: ‘O wonderful thing! The adulterer is fled. Master, take heed you be not deceived again.’ ‘Peace,’ quoth he, ‘and be of good cheer. I have this wicked and mischievous woman, which I most desired.’ And thus, after he had taken her, he brought her toward the city. But she, weighing with herself—as is likely—in what case she was; the beguiling of her expectation, the punishment decreed by the laws, and the shameful-ness of her offence; moreover vexing herself because she was caught in such fashion, but especially taking it heavily that she was thus deluded and flouted; when she came to the pit which is in the compass of of Plato’s school—you know it I am sure—where the captains do celebrate the honour of our dead Heroes after the manner of our country, suddenly

pulling herself out of the old man's hands leapt headlong into the same : and such an unhappy end had that mischievous woman. Then said Aristippus : 'Indeed thy punishment hath prevented the laws.' The next day he declared the whole matter to the people, and having scarcely obtained pardon for the deed, he went to divers of his friends and devised with them by what means he might obtain leave for you to come home again. Whether he has done anything or not I cannot tell ; for, as you see, before anything could be finished I sailed hither about certain business of my own. Notwithstanding, you ought to be in good comfort that the people will consent easily to your return, and that your father shortly will come to seek you and fetch you home again ; for that he declared openly that he would do." 'Thus much Charias told me. What followed, and how I came here, and what mischances I have met require both longer talk and time to tell.'

Therewithal he wept, as did the strangers also under cover of his calamity, but indeed for the remembrance of their own mishaps. And for the very pleasure of tears they would not have ceased from weeping had not sleep flying down upon them assuaged their grief. So they fell to slumber. But Thyamis,—for thus was the master of the thieves called—after he had passed the greater part of the night quietly, was later troubled with certain dreams and therewith suddenly awakened lay wondering what the solution of them should be. For about the time that cocks crow—whether it be, as men say, that they naturally perceive the conversion of the Sun as he approacheth near to us and so are moved to salute the god, or else from too much heat and a desire for movement

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

and food they give such as dwell with them by their crowing a warning to rise to their work—a vision such as this, sent from God, appeared to him. As he entered into the temple of Isis at Memphis in his own city, he thought that all was on fire, and that the altars filled with every kind of beast did swim with blood, and that all the place about was filled with the noise and tumult of men. When he came into the prouiest place of the shrine, the goddess met him and gave Chariclea into his hands and said : ‘ Thyamis, I commit this maid to thee ; yet, having her thou shalt not have her : thou shalt be unjust and kill the stranger, but she shall not be killed.’ After he had had this dream he was troubled in mind, casting this way and that way how that which was foreshowed to him might be interpreted. At length, being weary of beating his brains he drew the meaning thereof to his own will and construed it thus. ‘ Thou having shall not have her ’—that is, a wife and not a maid any longer. By ‘ thou shalt kill ’ he conjectured ‘ thou shalt take her virginity ’ ; whereof, for all that, Chariclea should not die. Thus did he interpret the dream, following therein his own lust and desire.

As soon as the day appeared he commanded the chief of those who were under his jurisdiction to come unto him, and charged them to bring forth their prey, which by a graver name he termed their spoils ; and calling for Cnemon told him also to bring those with him who were committed to his custody. As they were being brought, ‘ Oh,’ said they ‘ what shall become of us.’ And therewith they desired Cnemon, if by any means he might, that he would help them. He promised so to do, and bade them be of good cheer, affirming that their captain was not altogether barbarously disposed but had in him some gentleness

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

and courtesy, as one that was come of a noble stock but by necessity compelled to follow such a trade. After they were brought thither and the rest of the company assembled, Thyamis, being set in a higher place than the others in the island which he appointed the place of their meeting, commanded Cnemon—for he by this time understood the Egyptian tongue perfectly but Thyamis was not very skilled in the Greek—to interpret what he said to the prisoners, and thus began : ‘ My mates, of what mind I have been ever toward you, you know very well. Although I was the son of the priest of Memphis, as you can bear me witness, I was frustrated of the priestly honour, since my younger brother by craft beguiled me of the same. I fled to you, the better to revenge my wrong and recover my ancient estate, and by all your voices made your captain have hitherto lived with you and not given any special honour to myself. If money was to be divided, I ever loved equality ; if prisoners sold, I always brought the sum forth to you, accounting it the office of him who will rule well to do most himself but to take equal share with the others of that which is gotten. Such captives as were strong I enrolled among your company ; the feeble sort I sold to make money of. I never did wrong to women ; such as were of good parentage I suffered to depart, either redeemed with money or else for sheer pity of their ill hap ; such as were of inferior condition, whom not only the law of arms made prisoners but also their continual use had taught to serve, I distributed among you severally to do you service. To-day, of all the spoils I crave one thing only of you, this stranger maid, whom although I might give unto myself, yet I thought I should do better to take her with all your consents. For it

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

would be foolish for me to force our prisoner and seem to be acting contrary to my comrades' pleasure. Wherefore I crave this good turn at your hands, not for naught, but rewarding you again in such sorts that of all the other booty I will have no part at all. For seeing that the prophetical sort of men despiseth the common sort of woman, I have decreed to make her my companion, not for pleasure so much as to have issue by her ; and therefore I am content to rehearse to you the causes that move me thus to do. First, she seemeth to be of good parentage ; which a man may easily guess both by the riches found about her, and for that she is nothing broken with these adversities, but even now is of a haughty stomach against fortune. Secondly, I infer she is of an excellent nature and good disposition ; for if she doth surpass all others in beauty and by the modesty of her look doth move all those who gaze upon to her to a certain kind of gravity, shall she not deservedly leave behind her a due estimation of herself ? Lastly, and this is of more account than all I have said, she seemeth to be priestess to some god. For even in her adversity she accounteth it an intolerable and heinous offence to leave off her sacred stole and laurel garland. Can there be therefore, O you that be present, any marriage more meet than that a man being a prophet should marry one consecrated to some god ? '

All that were there approved his sayings and prayed the gods to give him joy of his marriage. Which thing when he heard he said to them again : 'I thank you all : but in my opinion it will not be amiss if about this matter we enquire the maid's mind. For if I listed to use my own authority my will were sufficient, because it is a needless thing to ask their good will whom a man may constrain.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

But in this case, seeing we deal with a lawful marriage it is convenient to be done with both consents.' Then, turning his talk to them, he asked the maid how she liked that which was propounded as touching her marriage, and therewithal bade them to declare what they were and where they were born. But she for a long time cast her eyes to the ground, moving her head to and fro as though she were thinking what she should say. At last she looked up at Thyamis and with the brightness of her beauty abashed him more than ever she did before—for by the inward cogitation of her mind her cheeks became more red than accustomably they were and her eyes were very earnestly bent upon him—and by Cnemon her interpreter spake thus : " It were more meet that my brother Theagenes here should have told this tale, for my opinion is that a woman ought to keep silence and a man amongst men should make answer. But seeing that you have given me leave to speak, and thereby an especial token of your courtesy, that you mean rather by persuasion to attempt that which is just than by force to compel ; and the rather because that which hath been spoken most touches me, I am constrained to pass those bonds which I prescribed to myself and are proper for maidens, and to answer now the victor's question in so great an assembly of men. We were born in Ionia and come of a noble house of Ephesus. When we came to the age of fourteen years, by the law—which calleth such as us to the office of priesthood—I was made priest to Artemis, and this my brother of Apollo. But, as this honour lasts but for a year and our time was expired, we prepared to go to Delos with our sacred attire, and there to make certain games of music and gymnastic, and give over our priesthood according

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

to the manner of our ancestors. For this cause was our ship laden with gold, silver, goodly apparel and other necessaries, as much as were necessary for the expenses of the same and to make the people a public feast ; and thus we loosed out of the haven. Our parents, since they were old and feared the dangerousness of the voyage, tarried at home ; but many of the other citizens, some in our ship, others in boats of their own, came to accompany us. After we had ended the greatest part of our voyage a tempest suddenly arose and a vehement wind with fearful blasts moving great waves of the sea. This caused us to leave our determined journey, for our steersman overcome by the greatness of the danger in the violence of the storm gave up the tiller and let fortune control our course. We were driven by the wind for seven days and seven nights, and at last we were cast upon the shore whereon you found us and saw the great slaughter. In that place the mariners, as we were banqueting for joy of our unlooked for delivery, attacked us and for our riches sought to destroy us. But they were all slain, not without the destruction of our friends and acquaintance—which would God had not happened—and we only poor miserable creatures were left as victors. But seeing it is thus, we have good cause in one respect to count ourselves happy, because some god has brought us into your hands, where those who feared death have now space to think on marriage. Which surely I shall not refuse. For that the captive should be judged worthy of the victor's bed doth not only pass all other felicity, but that a priest's son shall marry a woman consecrated to the gods seemeth not to be done without the singular foresight and providence of God. I therefore crave but one thing only at thy

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

hand, Thyamis. Suffer me first, as soon as I shall come to any city or any place where is an altar or temple sacred to Apollo, to surrender my priesthood and the tokens thereof. This might be done very commodiously at Memphis, when you have recovered the honour of your priesthood ; for by that means it should come to pass that marriage joined with victory after good luck celebrated shall be much more merry. But whether this must be done before or after I leave to your discretion ; only I beg that I may fulfil the rites of my country before. I know that you will hereunto agree, who have been brought up, as you said, from your childhood to holy offices and think also very well and reverently of the gods."

With this she made an end of speaking and began bitterly to weep. All they who were present praised her and willed that it should be done even so, and for their parts they promised their ready aid to do whatsoever he would. So Thyamis, partly willing, partly against his will consented. For through the desire he had toward Chariclea he accounted the time necessary for the doing of these things to be an infinite delay ; but on the other hand he was enchanted by her speech, as if it had been some mermaid's song, and was enforced to consent to her ; and he thought withal of his dream, supposing that he should be married at Memphis. This done, having first divided the booty and taken some of the best jewels, which of their own accord they gave him, he suffered every man to depart, with further commandment to be ready the tenth day after to go toward Memphis. He let the Greeks have the tent that they had before ; and with them was Cnemon, not as a keeper now but as a companion ; and Thyamis furnished them with as good victual as there might be gotten. Whereof

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

Theagenes for his sister's sake had part. Thyamis determined not to look upon Chariclea very often, that her beauty might not move his hot desire to do something contrary to that which by common counsel was decreed, as was before rehearsed. For these causes he would not look upon the maid, thinking it an impossible thing that a man should both look upon a fair maid and keep himself within the bounds of temperance. But Cnemon, after every man was quickly dispatched and were crept into the corners which they had in the marsh, went to seek the herb which the day before he promised Theagenes.

Then Theagenes, having got fit opportunity, began to weep and cry out, speaking never a word to Chariclea, but without cease calling upon the gods. And when she asked him whether after his accustomed manner he deplored their common mishap, or had any new grief befallen him—‘What,’ quoth he, ‘can be more new or contrary to equity than to break an oath and final agreement? Chariclea hath forgotten me and is content to marry another man.’ ‘God forbid,’ said the maid; ‘I pray you be not more grievous to me than the miseries I have already, neither misdeem anything from my speech, applied to the time and perhaps to some purpose, seeing that before this by many proofs you have tried how I am affected toward you. Except perchance the contrary may happen, and that you sooner change your mind than I will depart from any the least jot of my promise. For I am content and take in good part all these calamities; but that I shall not live chastely there is no torment that may constrain me. In one thing only I know I have not ruled myself, that is in the love I have borne to you from the beginning. But my affection for you is both lawful and honest.

I have not yielded to you as a lover, but from the first concluding marriage with you as a husband have committed myself to your care, and have lived chastely without copulation hitherto, not without refusing you often times proffering me such things, and have waited for occasion to be married, if anywhere it might lawfully be done, which thing at the first was decreed between us and by oath established. Besides, consider how foolish you are if you suppose that I esteem a barbarous fellow more than a Greek, a thief more than him whom with my heart I love.' 'What did those things then mean,' said Theagenes, 'which in that goodly company were of you openly rehearsed? For in that you feigned me to be your brother, it was a very wise device, which caused Thyamis to be very far from jealousy of our love and made us to be together safely. I perceived also to what end that tended which you said of Ionia and of wandering about Delos. For they were shadows that might easily cover the truth and deceive indeed the auditors. But so readily to approve the marriage, and openly to conclude the same, and to appoint the time therefore; what that should signify neither could I guess, nor would I. But I wished that the earth might have cloven and swallowed me up rather than that I should have seen such an end of the travail and hope that for your sake I undertook.' Herewithal Chariclea embraced Theagenes, and kissed him a thousand times, and bemoistening his face with her tears—'Oh in how good part,' said she, 'do I take these fears that for my sake you sustain. For hereby you declare that you quail not in your love toward me, although many miseries depend thereupon. But know for a truth, Theagenes, that we should not be now talking together if I had not made him such a

promise. For drawing back and opposition do much kindle the force of vehement desire ; whereas yielding talk that coincides with a man's wishes quiets his burning love and with a pleasant promise puts to sleep his too keen appetite. For rude lovers think that such a promise is the first round in the battle and think therewith that they are victors, and after that are of quieter minds ever hovering in hope. All which things I foreseeing in word committed myself to him, commanding what shall follow to the gods and to the angel, who at first obtained the tuition of our love. Often the space of a day or two has been very healthful, and fortune brings things to a happy pass such as no device of man could ensure : wherefore, weighing the sure against the uncertain, I have preferred this invention of mine before all others. We must then, sweet love, use this policy wisely, and keep it secret not only from all others but also from Cnemon too. For although he seem to favour our estate and is a Grecian, yet being at this time a prisoner he will perhaps, if occasion serve, be ready to do the captain a good turn. For neither this time of friendship nor his countrymanship is a sufficient pledge to us of his fidelity and truth. Wherefore if at any time by suspicion he gather anything touching our estate we must deny it. For that manner of a lie is tolerable, which profiteth the inventor and hurteth not the hearer.'

While Chariclea spake these words and many others to good purpose, Cnemon ran in hastily, declaring a great perturbation by his countenance. 'Theagenes,' quoth he, 'I bring you this herb, wherewith I pray you dress your own wounds. But I fear me you must prepare yourself to receive other as great wounds

as these and shedding of blood.' Theagenes asked of him what the matter was and desired him to tell it more plainly. 'The time,' answered he, 'will not suffer me; for it is to be feared lest we should feel the stripes before I could tell you the circumstances. But follow me quickly, and Chariclea also.' Thus he carried them both to Thyamis, whom he found scouring of his helmet and sharpening the point of his spear. 'In good time,' said he, 'are you in hand with your arms: put them on quickly yourself and command the others to do the like. For such a company of enemies is at hand as I never saw before, so close that I saw them crossing the top of the next hill, and for that cause came running as fast as I could to tell you of their coming, and have moreover by the way as I came commanded such as I saw to be in readiness.' Thyamis when he heard this, leapt up and asked where Chariclea was, as though he were more afraid for her than for himself. When Cnemon had shown her to him standing quiet at the door—'Carry her alone,' quoth he, 'into the den where our treasures are kept: lower her down and put the cover back over the entrance, as our manner is, friend; and then come quickly back. As for the war, let me alone with it.' Then he bade his shield-bearer bring his offering that after sacrifice done to the gods they might begin the battle, while Cnemon did as he was commanded and carried Chariclea away diversely lamenting and often looking back to Theagenes, and at the length put her into the den.

This was no natural work, as many caverns are both in and under the earth; but devised by the wit of thieves in imitation of nature and dug out by Egyptian hands very artfully to keep their spoils. It was made after this sort. It had a dark narrow

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

entrance and was shut with privy doors, so that even the threshold was in stead of a gate, when need required, and would open and shut very easily. The inner part was countermined variously with divers slanting ways, the which would sometimes run along by themselves artfully for a while and sometimes would be entangled like the roots of trees ; but in the end they all led to one level place which received a dim light from an opening made at the edge of the pool. Cnemon, who was well experienced in the place, took Chariclea down and led her to the end of the den, comforting her in many ways, but especially in that he promised her that he with Theagenes would come to her that night, and that he would not suffer him to strike one stroke in the battle, but would privily convey him out of the same. Then he left her, who spake not one word, but was as stricken by that misfortune as though it had been by death, in that she was deprived of Theagenes whom she loved as her own soul. So he went forth, and shutting the outermost door he wept a little, not only for that of force he was constrained so to do, but for her sake also, inasmuch as he had almost buried her alive and committed the joyfullest name in the world, Chariclea, to night and darkness. This done, he ran back to Thyamis, whom he found very desirous to fight, and with him Theagenes well armed, making those that were with him almost mad by his earnest oration. For as he stood in the midst of them, he said thus : " My mates, I see not to what end it should tend to use many words in exhorting you, who need no encouragement at all but have ever accounted war the pleasantest life, especially since the sudden approaching of our enemies will not permit us to use many words. For seeing that our enemies do now

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE.

violently assault us, if we should not with like courage repulse their violence, we should seem void of counsel and at our wits' end. We know that we are fighting not for our wives and children--these words make men pluck up their hearts for battle, although indeed they are not of great value and we shall have all that the conquerors gain, if we get the victory—but rather for our own lives and safety. A war with thieves never ends with a composition nor is concluded by a truce : those who win survive, those who are beaten are slain. So let us now with all our hearts and hands hasten to meet our cruel enemies."

When he had said this he looked about for his shield-bearer and called him by name, Thermuthis ; but when he could not see him anywhere, grievously threatening him, he ran as fast as he could to the landing place. For by this time the battle was begun, and a man even from afar might see that those who dwelt in the outer coasts of the fen were already in the enemies' hands. They who came upon them burned up the boats and cottages of such as either were slain or else fled out of the battle, whose eyes also were dazzled by the great and intolerable brightness of the fire that burned up the reeds, whereof there was great plenty, and their eyes filled with the great noise and tumult. A man might both see and hear the whole manner of the skirmish, those who dwelt there maintaining the battle with all their power and strength, and their enemies, being more in number and taking them at a sudden, killing some of them on the earth while others they drowned in the pool with boats and houses too. From all these, from those who fought by land and lake, did kill and were killed, as also from those who were beset by fire and water, there arose a marvellous sound in the air. Which

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

when Thyamis saw, he remembered his dream, wherein he saw Isis and her temple filled with fire and dead men, and supposing thereby to be meant that which he had now seen, he gathered thereof a contrary interpretation to that which he had made before, that—‘ having thou shalt not have Chariclea ’—she should be taken away by war, and that ‘ he should kill and not wound her,’ that is with his sword and not with carnal copulation. So, upbraiding the goddess as though she had beguiled him, and thinking it not meet that any other should enjoy Chariclea, he commanded his men to keep their places and maintain the battle as long as they might, by fighting stealthily round the island and making sallies from the marshes about, and thus to hold out against the greater numbers of the enemy. But he himself, pretending to seek Thermuthis and do certain sacrifices to his privy gods, suffering no man to go with him, in haste went to the cave, like a madman. Surely a barbarous nature cannot be easily withdrawn or turned from that which it hath once determined. And if barbarous folk be in despair of their own safety they have a custom to kill all those by whom they set much, and whose company they desire after death, or else would keep them from the violence and wrong of their enemies. For that same cause Thyamis, forgetting all he had to do, being enclosed by the enemy army as if he had been caught in a net, almost enraged with love jealousy and anger, after he came in haste to the cave, going into the same and crying with a loud voice and speaking many things in the Egyptian tongue, as soon as he heard one speak Greek to him about the entry of the cave and was conducted to her by her voice, laid his left hand upon her head and with his

sword thrust her through the body, a little beneath the paps.

And after this sorrowful sort that woman, giving up her last and ghastly groan, was slain. But he, after he had come out and had shut the door and had cast a little gravel thereon with tears, said : ‘ These espousals hast thou at my hand.’ Then, coming to his boats, he found a great many ready to run their way, as they saw the enemy now were near, and Thermuthis also coming to do sacrifice. Him he chided sharply, for that he himself had offered the most acceptable victim already, and went with him into a boat with another to row them ; for the boats that they use in the pool will carry no more than three, being but rudely hewed out of the rough wood. Theagenes also and Cnemon took another boat, and so did all the rest. After they had gone a little way from the island, rather rowing about the banks than venturing into the deep, they stayed their oars and set their boats in line, as though they would have received their enemies face to face. But when the others approached they could not even abide the splashing of the water, and as soon as they saw them took to flight, not enduring the first clamour and noise of battle. Theagenes also and Cnemon, but not for fear, by little and little withdrew themselves. Only Thyamis accounted it a shame to flee, or perhaps had no mind to live after Chariclea, and thrust himself into the thickest press of his enemies. As soon as they were come to blows, one cried out : ‘ This is Thyamis ; let every man do his best to take him alive.’ And therewithal they compassed him about and held him inclosed, as in a ring, in the midst of them. He fought against them stoutly, and to see how he wounded some and killed other some, it was

THE ROBBERS OF EGYPT

a worthy sight. For of so great a number there was none that either drew his sword against him, or else cast any dart ; but every man laboured to take him alive. He fought against them a great while, but at length he lost his spear, by reason that many fell on him at once. He lost also his harness-bearer, who had done him very good service ; for he being deadly wounded, as it seemed, despairing of his safety leapt into the pool and with much ado did swim to land, inasmuch as no man thought to pursue him.

And now they had taken Thyamis, and with him thought they had gotten the whole victory : and although they had lost so many of their companions, yet since they now had him in their hands, by whom they were slain, they had a greater joy thereby than sorrow for all their dead friends and kinsfolk. Such is the nature of thieves : they esteem money more than their own lives and only regard the name of friendship and affinity so far as lucre and gain shall extend. And this truth might easily be gathered from these men ; for they were those same who at the mouth of Nile called Heracleot fled for fear of Thyamis and his companions. Indignant at the loss of other men's goods as if they had been their own, they had got together their household friends and also those that dwelt near about them, and promising them an equal part of the booty had made themselves conductors and captains of the host. Now why they took Thyamis prisoner, this was the cause. He had a brother called Petosiris at Memphis, who, contrary to the manner and ordinance of the country—for he was a younger brother—had by craft beguiled him of his priesthood. And hearing now that his brother was become a captain of robbers, and fearing lest if

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

he got occasion he would return, or lest time itself should detect his subtle dealing; and besides this considering the voice of many people who supposed that he had slain him, because he could no where be seen, he sent to the thieves' villages, and promised a great sum of money and cattle to those who would take and bring him alive. Wherewith the thieves being allured forgot not their gain even in the midst of war, and after one had recognised him took him alive, at the price of many deaths, and carried him to land and placed one half of them as a guard about him, casting in their teeth the clemency they had used towards him and misliking their bonds worse than death itself. The rest went to search the island, in hope to find other treasures that they sought for. But though they went over the same and left nothing unsearched that was there, they found nothing of that they hoped for, except a few things of little value left about the mouth of the cave when the rest had been hidden under the ground. So as it drew toward night, and they might tarry no longer in the island, for fear lest they should fall into an ambush at the hands of those that had escaped from the battle, they set fire to the tents and returned to their own company.

THE SECOND BOOK

THE FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

And thus was the island with fire and flame destroyed. Theagenes and Cnemon, as long as the sun shone upon the earth, knew not of this mischief ; for the brightness of fire by reason of the Sun's beams is in the day time much dimmed. But after the sun was set and the night drew on and the fire without impediment might be seen afar off, they taking courage in the darkness came out of the pool and perceived the whole island to be on fire. Then Theagenes beating his head and tearing his hair cried : “ Farewell this day my life : here let all fear, dangers, cares, hopes and love have end and be dissolved : Chariclea is dead and Theagenes is destroyed. In vain was I, unhappy man, afraid and content to take to shameful flight, saving my life, sweetheart, for thee. Surely I will live no longer since thou, my joy, art dead, not according to the common course of nature, which is a very grievous thing, and wert not in the arms thou didst desire, when thou left this life. With fire—alas, wretch that I am—wert thou consumed, and instead of lights at thy marriage these were the torches that God ordained for thee. The bravest beauty in the world is lost, so that no token of such singular fairness remaineth in the dead body. Oh marvellous cruelty and unspeakable wrath of the gods ! I was not allowed to give her my last embracings, I was deprived of my last kisses ! ”

While he spake thus and looked about for his sword, Cnemon struck up his hand : ‘ What meaneth this, Theagenes ? ’ said he, ‘ Why do you thus bewail her who is alive. Chariclea is safe, fear not ! ’ ‘ Cnemon,’ said the other, you may tell mad men and children that tale, You have undone me by hindering me from so pleasant a death .’ Thereupon Cnemon sware to him and told him of the commandment of Thyamis and of the nature of the den, how he had placed her there, and how it was not to be feared that the fire would reach the depths below, being broken and put back by six hundred windings. Theagenes began to come to himself again when he heard this, and hastened to the island, and in his mind began to look for the maid as though she were present, and made the den his marriage chamber ; not knowing the sorrow whereunto soon he should fall. Thither then they set out in haste, themselves playing the watermen ; for he who rowed them before had been stricken overboard into the lake by the noise of the first conflict as though by a pole. This way and that they were carried, as well for that they were both ignorant of rowing and did not place the oars equally, as also for that they had a contrary wind. But for all that the readiness of their wills got the victory of their ignorance.

When therefore with much ado they were arrived in the island, they ran to the tents as fast as they could ; which also they found burnt and could not recognise them, but only by the manner of the place ; for there could nothing be seen but the great stone which was the threshold and the cover also of the cave. For a vehement wind blowing the fire upon the cottages, which were made only of the slender reeds that grew on the marsh banks, burned them up everywhere and made them almost equal with the

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

ground. But when the violent fire slaked and was turned to ashes, which also were driven away with a blast of wind and that which remained, being little, was quenched and granted them free passage, they came to the cave, the posts whereof and the reeds they found also half burnt, and opening the door, Cnemon leading the way, they ran down apace. But after they had gone a little way, Cnemon suddenly cried out : ‘ O Jupiter, what meaneth this ? We are undone. Chariclea is slain.’ And therewith he cast his light to the ground and put it out, and holding his hands before his face fell on his knees and lamented. But Theagenes, as though by violence one had thrust him down, fell on the dead body, and held the same in his arms a great while without moving. Cnemon therefore perceiving he was utterly overcome with sorrow, and fearing lest he should do himself some harm, took his sword secretly out of his scabbard and ran out to light his link again.

In the meantime Theagenes tragically and with much sorrow lamented : ‘ O grief intolerable,’ said he, ‘ O manifold mischiefs sent from the gods ! What insatiable Fury so much rageth still to have us destroyed ! She hath banished us out of our country, cast us to dangers by seas and perils from pirates, hath often delivered us into the hands of robbers, and despoiled us of all our treasures ! Only one comfort we had, which is now taken from us ; Chariclea, my only joy, is dead and by enemies’ hands is slain. While she no doubt defended her chastity and reserved herself unto me, she, unhappy creature, is dead, and neither had she by her beauty any pleasure nor I any commodity. But, O my sweet-heart, speak to me a last word, as thou wert wont to do, and if there be any life in thee command me to do

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

somewhat. Alas, thou dost hold thy peace : that godly mouth of thine, out of the which proceeded so heavenly talk, is stopped : darkness hath possessed her who bore the sacred torch : and the last end of all hath now gotten the best minister that belonged to any temple of the gods. These eyes of thine, that dazzled all men with their fairness, are now without sight ; which he who killed thee saw not I am sure. By what name shall I call thee ? My spouse ? Thou wert never espoused. My wife ? Thou never wast married. What shall I therefore call thee ? Or how shall I lastly speak unto thee ? Shall I call thee by the most delectable name of all names, Chariclea ? O Chariclea, hear me ; thou hast a faithful lover and shalt ere long recover me again, for I will out of hand with my own death perform a deadly sacrifice to thee, with mine own blood will I offer a friendly offering to thee, and this den shall be a hasty sepulchre for us both. It shall be lawful for us after death to enjoy each other, which while we lived the gods would not grant.'

As soon as he had spoken thus, he set his hand, as though he would have drawn out his sword. Which when he found not : 'O Cnemon' said he, 'how hast thou hurt me, and especially injured Chariclea depriving her again of the company she loves best.' While he spake thus, through the hollow holes of the cave, there was a voice heard, that called— 'Theagenes.' He, nothing afraid made answer, and 'O sweet soul' said he 'I come. By this it manifestly appeareth that thou art yet above the earth, partly for that by violence expulsed from such a body thou canst not depart without grief, partly for that, not yet buried, thou art chased away perchance by the infernal shades.' When Cnemon came in with a light

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

in his hand, the same voice was heard again calling—‘Theagenes.’ ‘O gods,’ said Cnemon, ‘is this not Chariclea’s voice? Surely, Theagenes, I think she is yet saved. From the inner part of the cave, where I know well I left her, that voice strikes upon mine ears.’ ‘Wilt thou not cease,’ said Theagenes, ‘so oft to deceive and beguile me?’ ‘Indeed,’ said Cnemon, ‘I deceive you and am myself deceived, if we shall find that this be Chariclea who lieth here.’ And therewithal he turned her face upward. Which as soon as he saw: ‘Ye gods,’ he cried, ‘who be the authors of all wonders, what strange sight is this! I see here Thisbe’s face.’ And therewith he leapt back, and without moving any whit stood quaking in a great amazement.

Thereupon Theagenes came somewhat to himself, and began to conceive some better hope in his mind, and comforted Cnemon whose heart now failed him, and desired him in all haste to carry him to Chariclea. After a while Cnemon came somewhat to himself again and looked more advisedly on the woman lying there. It was Thisbe indeed; and he knew also the sword that lay by her by the hilt to be Thyamis’, which he for anger and haste had left in the wound. Last of all he saw a little scroll hanging at her breast, which he took away and would fain have read. But Theagenes would not let him, but pressed him very urgently, saying: ‘Let us first recover my sweetheart, lest even now some god beguile us: as for these things we may know them hereafter.’ Cnemon was content, and so taking the sword and the letter in his hand also went in to Chariclea, who, creeping on hands and feet to the light, ran to Theagenes and hung about his neck. ‘Now, Theagenes, thou art restored to me again’ said she. ‘Thou livest, mine own Chariclea,’

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

quoth he oftentimes. At length they fell suddenly to the ground, holding each other in their arms, without uttering any word, as though they were fastened together, and it lacked but a little that they were not both dead. For many times too much gladness is turned to sorrow, and immoderate pleasure engenders grief, whereof ourselves are the causes. So these two, preserved contrary to their hope, were now in peril, until Cnemon, finding a little spring, took water in his hands, and sprinkled it on their faces, and rubbing their nostrils caused them to come to themselves again.

When they perceived their changed position, so familiarly embraced upon the ground, they started up suddenly and blushed—but especially Chariclea—because of Cnemon, who had seen these things, and desired him to pardon them. He, smiling a little and willing to turn their minds to some mirth, said to them: ‘In my opinion, or any man’s else who hath before wrestled with love and hath pleasantly yielded in moderation to the necessary chance thereof, such falls as these are both inevitable and praiseworthy. But I could not commend you, Theagenes, nay I was quite ashamed, when I saw you mournfully embrace a strange woman, one to whom you were bound by no bond of friendship, though I plainly affirmed your dearest friend was alive and safe.’ ‘Cnemon,’ quoth Theagenes, ‘accuse me not to Chariclea, whom in another’s body I bewailed, thinking her to have been this wench who was slain. But as the good will of God hath now declared that I was in so doing beguiled, remember, I pray you, your own wondrous show of courage. You were deplored my case at first, and then suddenly recognising her who lay there, you the stout Athenian warrior with a sword by your side, shrank

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

back in fear from a woman, and she dead, no less than if gods had been set before you on the stage.' Hereat they smiled a little, but not without tears, as it happeneth to men in such misery. Then Chariclea, after waiting a little, scratching her cheek under her ear 'I judge her happy,' said she, 'whoever she was, whom Theagenes lamented and kissed also, as Cnemon reporteth; but if you would not think I was jealous, I would gladly know, if you can tell me, what happy woman that was who was worthy of Theagenes' tears, and by what error you kissed her instead of me.' 'Surely,' said he, 'you will wonder at it greatly; for Cnemon saith it was Thisbe, that cunning player of the harp, the deviser of the wiles against him and Demeneta.' Hereat Chariclea afraid asked Cnemon: 'How is it likely that she should come out of the midst of Greece as of set purpose into the farthest part of Egypt? Or how is it possible that when we came hither we saw her not?' 'As touching that,' said Cnemon, 'I have nothing to say. But thus much I heard of her. After that Demeneta, prevented by her craft, had cast herself into the well, and my father had opened the matter to the people, he at first obtained pardon, and was altogether busied that he might get leave of the people to restore me again, and made preparation to seek me. Thisbe meanwhile because of his business had little to do, and banqueting without care continually set, as it were, for sale both herself and her art. And while in grace she far surpassed Arsinoe's slow flute playing, both in quick fingering and in sweet singing to the harp, she perceived not thereby that she incurred for herself that wench's jealousy conjoined with a singular indignation; most of all when she became beloved of a certain merchant of Naucratis named Nausicles, who now

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

despised Arsinoe, with whom he accompanied before, because that while she played the flute her cheeks swelled and were unseemly, and her eyes stared, almost leaving their accustomed place.

Wherefore Arsinoe, swelling with anger and emulation, came to Demeneta's kinsfolk and told them the whole manner of the wiles that Thisbe had used against her, whereof some she herself suspected, and Thisbe had told her other some, in the time of their friendship. So Demeneta's kinsfolk arranged together to have my father condemned and procured the most eloquent orators with great sums of money to accuse him. Demeneta, they said, had been killed without judgment before she was convicted ; the adultery was pretended to colour the murder ; and therefore they required to have the adulterer either quick or dead, or at least to know his name, and last of all that Thisbe should be brought to examination. Which when my father had promised and could not perform—for she had so provided that before the day of judgment she went her way with the merchant, as they had agreed—the people, taking the matter in evil part, judged him not indeed her murderer, in as much as he had told the matter plainly as it was done, but that he had helped to the death of Demeneta and mine own unjust banishment. Wherefore they exiled him out of his country and confiscated all his goods ; and this commodity got he by his second marriage. But the most wicked Thisbe, who lies here slain before me, for this reason sailed from Athens. This much only could I know, which Anticles told me in Aegina, with whom I sailed twice to Egypt, if I might find her in Naucratis to bring her back to Athens and deliver my father from the suspicions and accusations that were laid against him, and take

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

revenge on her for all the mischief that she has done unto us : and into these matters I now purpose with you to make further inquiry. As touching the cause of my coming hither, the manner thereof, and the dangers I have suffered meanwhile, you shall hereafter know. But how, and by whom Thisbe was slain in this den, we shall have need perhaps of some oracle to tell us. Nevertheless, if you will let us look at the letter which we found in her bosom, it may be that we shall learn somewhat beside.' They were content ; and he, opening it, began to read as followeth :

' To Cnemon, my master, Thisbe, his enemy and avenger. First I tell you of the death of Demeneta, which for your sake I devised against her. As to the manner how I brought it to pass if you do ransom me, I will tell you betwixt us two. Understand that I was taken by one of the thieves who are of this crew, and have been here ten days already. He sayeth he is the captain's harness-bearer, and will not give me leave so much as to look abroad, and thus he punisheth me as he saith, for the love he hath toward me ; but as far as I can gather, it is from fear lest some man else should take me from him. Yet for all that, by the benefit of some god I saw you, my master, passing by yesterday, and knew you, and have therefore sent this letter to you by an old woman my bedfellow, charging her to deliver it to a beautiful young man being a Grecian and the captain's friend. Redeem me, I pray you, out of the hands of the thief and entertain your handmaid. Preserve me, if you will it so ; knowing this first, that whenever I offended against you I was constrained to do it, but in that I revenged you of your enemy I did it of my own free will. But if your anger be so grievous against

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

me that it will not be assuaged, use it toward me as you think good : provided I be in your hand, I care not if I die. For I account it much better, being an Athenian, to be slain at your hands and to be buried after the manner of the Greeks, than to lead a life more grievous than death and sustain such a barbarous love as is more intolerable than hatred.'

Thus spake Thisbe in her letter. But Cnemon said : ' With good reason, Thisbe, wert thou slain, and thyself art messenger to tell us of thy fate, making declaration thereof by thine own death. Thus hath the avenging Fury, as it now appears, driving thee over all the world not withdrawn her scourge before she made me, whom thou hast injured, although living in Egypt, to be the beholder of thy punishment. But what mischief was that which thou didst erstwhile devise against me and by this letter wert still plotting, which Fortune did not let thee bring to end ? Verily even now I much mistrust thee and am in great doubt lest the death of Demeneta be but a tale, and that both they beguiled me who told me of the same, and that thou art come by sea out of Greece to make in Egypt another tragedy of me.' ' Will you not have done,' said Theagenes, ' with such valiant talk ? Are you afraid of the shadows and spirits of dead folk ? You cannot object and say that she hath either beguiled me, or deceived my sight, seeing that I have no part in this play. Be sure, Cnemon, that this body is dead and therefrom have you no cause for fear. But who did you this good turn in killing her, or how she was brought hither, or when, I myself am in great marvel.' ' As for the rest,' said Cnemon, ' I cannot tell. But surely Thyamis slew her, as by the sword which lay by her being dead we can guess. For I know it to be his by the hilt of ivory, whereon

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

is an eagle graven.' 'Tell me then,' said Theagenes, how, when, and wherefore he killed her.' 'How can I tell you?' answered Cnemon. 'This cave hath not made me a soothsayer as doth Apollo's shrine at Delphi, or those that enter into Trophonius' den, which rapt with divine fury do prophecy.' When Theagenes and Chariclea heard this, suddenly lamenting—'O Pytho, O Delphi,'—they cried. Wherewith Cnemon was abashed, knowing not what they conceived by the name of Pytho.

Thus were they occupied. But Thermuthis, the harness-bearer of Thyamis, after being wounded had escaped the battle and swam to land; and when night came he got a loose boat and hastened to the island and to Thisbe whom he had taken a few days before from the merchant Nausicles, setting an ambush for him in a narrow way by the side of the hill. After the broil began and the enemies approached, when Thyamis sent him to fetch the sacrifice to the gods, desiring to place her out of danger of weapons and to keep her for himself in safety, he put her privily into the cave, and for haste left her but in the entry thereof. In which place, as she at the first was left, she stayed, partly for fear of the present perils, partly since she knew not the ways that went into the bottom of the cave; and there Thyamis finding her instead of Chariclea slew her. To her then Thermuthis made haste, after he had escaped from the battle, and as soon as he was landed in the island he ran to the tents, where beside ashes he found nothing. But finding at length the mouth of the cave by the stone, the reeds, if any were left, being still on fire, he ran down in great haste and called Thisbe by name, so far at least using the Greek tongue.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Whom after he found dead, he stood a good while without moving in a great study ; and at length hearing out of the inner parts of the cave a certain noise—for Theagenes and Cnemon were yet in talk—he straightway deemed that they had slain her, and was thereat much troubled in his mind, and could not well tell what to do. For the barbarous anger and the fierceness which is natural in thieves, kindled the more since he was now beguiled of his love, moved him to set upon those he deemed the authors of that murder. But since he had neither armour or weapon, he was constrained, whether he would or no, to be quiet. He determined therefore not to come upon them as an enemy at the first, but if he could get any armour, then to set on them after. When he had thus decided he came to Theagenes and looked about him with eyes frowning and terribly bent, so that with his countenance he plainly betrayed the inward cogitation of his mind. They seeing a man come in upon them suddenly, sore wounded, naked, and with a bloody face, behaved not themselves all alike, but Chariclea ran into a corner of the cave, fearing perhaps to look upon a man so unsightly and naked. Cnemon seeing Thermuthis, contrary to his expectation, and knowing him well, mistrusting that he would enterprise somewhat, held his peace and stepped back. But that sight did not so much frighten Theagenes as move him to wrath, who drew his sword and made as he would strike him if he stirred, and bade him stand—‘Or else’ quoth he—‘thou shalt know the price of thy coming ; which for the moment thou hast escaped, insamuch as I recognise thee somewhat, although I know not the reason why thou comest.’ Thermuthis came near and spoke him fair, having respect rather to the present time than to his own

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

habit, and desired Cnemon to be his friend, and said that he deserved his help because he had never done him wrong, and had been his companion the day before, and that he came to them as to friends.

Cnemon was moved by his words, and coming to him helped him up—for he held Theagenes by the knees—and inquired of him where Thyamis was. He told him everything: how he fought with his enemies, how he went into the thickest press of them, neither caring for his own life nor theirs, how he slew every man that came within his reach, and himself was guarded and compassed about, and straight charge given that every man should forbear Thyamis. ‘But what became of him at length,’ quoth he ‘I cannot tell: I was grievously wounded and swam to land, and at this time am come unto the cave to seek Thisbe.’ Thereupon they asked him what he had to do with Thisbe, or how he came by her. Thermuthis then told them how he took her from certain merchants, and how he loved her wonderfully, and kept her privily in his own tent, and before the coming of the enemies put her into this cave, and that he now found her slain by some he knew not, but he would be glad to understand why and for what occasion it was done. Cnemon herewith, desirous to deliver himself quickly from all suspicion, said: ‘Thyamis killed her.’ And therewith for proof he showed him the sword which they had found by her when she was slain. Which as soon as Thermuthis saw, bloody and almost warm with the late slaughter, and knew that it was Thyamis’ sword indeed, fetching a great sigh from the bottom of his heart and at a loss to know how matters stood, he went out of the den overwhelmed with darkness and silent, and coming to the

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

dead body—‘ O Thisbe ’—he said oft, but nothing else, repeating each syllable of the name. And so at last his senses failed him and he fell asleep.

Meanwhile Theagenes, Chariclea and Cnemon began to think of their own business, and seemed as though they would consult together thereof. But their manifold miseries past, and the greatness of their present calamity, and the uncertainty of that which was to come did hinder and darken the reasonable part of their mind, so that they gazed one upon the other and every one waited for what his fellow would say as touching their present state. After this, their hope failing them, they would cast their eyes to the ground and with sorrowful sighs lift them up again, relieving their grief with lamentation. At length Cnemon laid himself on the ground, Theagenes sat down on a stone, and Chariclea leaned on him. For a while they strove to overcome sleep, desiring to consider somewhat of their present affairs, but being by sorrow and labour much distressed they were constrained, although against their will, to obey the law of nature, and out of their great heaviness they fell into a pleasant sleep. Thus did the reasonable part of their mind endure to agree with the affection of the body. But after they had slumbered but a short while, so that their eyes were scarcely close shut, Chariclea, who lay there with them, had this marvellous dream. A man with long rough hair, blood-shot eyes, and red dripping hands thrust his sword into the socket and tore away her right eye. Therewith she suddenly cried out, saying that she had lost one of her eyes, and called for Theagenes ; who straight was at hand, and did bewail her harm, as if in his sleep he had felt the same. But she put her hand to her face, and felt everywhere for the eye which was lost, and as soon as she knew it

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

was a dream : ‘ It is a dream,’ said she, ‘ Theagenes : I have mine eye : come hither and fear not.’ Theagenes herewith was well pleased and—‘ As is meet,’ quoth he, ‘ you have your eyes as bright as sunbeams. But what ailed you and why were you so afraid ? ’ ‘ An ill-favoured froward fellow,’ quoth she, ‘ nothing fearing your invincible strength, came to me as I leaned on your knees, with a sword in his hand, in such sort that verily I thought he had plucked out my right eye. And I would to God that it had been so indeed, rather than appeared to me in my sleep.’ ‘ God forbid ’ : said he, ‘ but why do you speak thus ? ’ ‘ I wish it,’ said she, ‘ because it were better for me to lose both eyes than to be sorrowful for the loss of you. Surely I am sore afraid lest you be meant by this dream, whom I esteem as mine eye, my life, and all my riches. ‘ Not so,’ said Cnemon—for he had heard all, being awakened by the first cry of Chariclea —‘ it seems to me that your dream should mean another thing. Tell me, are your parents alive ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ said she ‘ if ever they were.’ ‘ Then you must judge,’ said he ‘ that your father is dead ; and that I gather from this, forasmuch as we know that our parents be the cause and authors of our life and that by them we see the light of day. Therefore with good reason do dreams liken our father and mother to a pair of eyes, since they give us the sensation of sight and help us to behold all things seen.’ ‘ That is a hard saying,’ replied Chariclea, but God grant that it be true rather than mine, and that your interpretation prevail and I be called the false prophet.’ ‘ These things shall thus no doubt come to pass,’ said Cnemon, ‘ and that you may believe. But we in truth seem to be dreaming now, trifling thus long about dreams and fantasies without any consideration of our own

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

business : and the rather seeing that this Egyptian' —he meant Thermuthis—‘ is separated from us, devising and bewailing of his dead love.’

Theagenes answered him and said : ‘ Cnemon, since some god hath joined you to us and made you partaker of our calamities, let us hear your advice first. You are skilled in these countries, and understand their tongue well ; and besides we are not so fit to comprehend what is necessary, for we are drowned in a deeper sea of troubles.’ Cnemon therefore after musing a little spake thus : ‘ Which of us is in greater misery I cannot tell, for I am sure that God hath laid calamities enough upon my back also. But since you bid me, as the elder, to give my advice as touching the present case, this is my mind. This island, as you see, is deserted, and hath no man in it but us. Moreover of silver and gold and precious apparel here is great store. Of such things Thyamis and his companions have taken much, as well from you as also from others, and have laid it here. But as for corn, and other things whereby our life may be maintained, there is not one whit. We are in danger then, if we tarry here long, either to perish for lack of food, or because of the return of our enemies, or even of those who have been of this fellowship, if they come to fetch this money whereof they all know. In that case we could not escape without death ; or even if they dealt more friendly with us we should be subject to their reproachful dealing and scornful behaviours. For while these herdsmen are always faithless, now they are so especially, since they lack a captain and ruler that might constrain them to be moderate. This island is to us but a snare and prison, which we must now leave and forsake, first dispatching Thermuthis away under pretence to inquire and seek to know some

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

certainty of Thyamis. For without him we shall consult more safely together and think of those things that are needful. And it is a point of wisdom to put out of our company a man by nature inconstant, endued with rude and uncourteous manners, who distrusteth us also somewhat because of Thisbe's death, and will not rest till he have, if occasion serve, by fraud beguiled us.'

They allowed his saying well and thought it good to do even so. Wherefore they went to the entry of the cave—for they perceived it was day by this time—and waked Thermuthis very drowsy with sleep. And when they had declared to him so much of their counsel as seemed good and had easily persuaded him, being a fickle fellow, and had cast Thisbe into a little pit, and as much dust upon her as was left from the tents, and done to her as religiously as the time would suffer, and with tears and with weepings, instead of all other ceremonies buried her, they sent Thermuthis about the pretended business, as they had arranged. But he, after he had gone a little way, returned again and said that he would not go alone, neither rashly object himself to so present a danger as to be a spy, unless Cnemon would go with him. When Theagenes perceived that Cnemon did shrink back—for when he told them what the Egyptian said he seemed to be much troubled in his mind and sore afraid—he said to him: 'Thou art able to give good counsel but thy heart faileth thee: which thing I have both at other times well perceived, but especially now. Pluck up your spirits and take a good heart to you; for at this time it seemeth necessary to consent and go with him, that he may conceive no suspicion of our intended flight—there is no danger for him that is armed and hath a sword to go with one utterly unarmed—and

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

then, if occasion serve, slip from him and come to us into some village hereby which we will agree upon. Cnemon was content, and appointed a certain town called Chemmis, very rich, and well peopled, situated upon a hill on the banks of the Nile that it might thereby be the better defended from the attacks of the herdsmen. The distance to it, after they had crossed the lake, was about a hundred furlongs ; and they must go straight southwards.

' It will be a hard road,' said Theagenes, ' especially for Chariclea, who hath not been accustomed to go long journeys. But for all that, we will go, and counterfeit ourselves to be beggars and such as go about with juggling tricks to get a living.' ' That will be well,' said Cnemon, ' for you be very ill-favoured people, most of all Chariclea, whose eye was lately pulled out : wherefore methinketh you will not ask for pieces of bread but for cauldrons and choppers.' Hereat they smiled a little, so that their laughter moved but their lips only. When therefore they had confirmed by oath that which was determined and had taken the gods to witness that they would never of their own will forsake one another, they went each of them about their decreed business.

Cnemon therefore and Thermuthis having in the morning early passed over the lake took their journey through a thick wood, wherein it was hard to find any way. Thermuthis went in front, for so Cnemon would have it, alleging the skill he had in that difficult passage and assigning to him the task of finding a way ; but in truth rather providing for his own safety and preparing a good opportunity to give him the slip. When they had gone a good way, they espied a flock of sheep, and after those who kept them had fled and crept into the thick wood hard by, they killed

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

one of the fairest rams that went before the flock, and roasting him at a fire which the shepherds had made, did eat of the flesh without tarrying, before it was thoroughly roasted, because their bellies were marvelously pinched with hunger. Like wolves therefore or jackals they devoured the parts they cut off, though they were but just blackened in the fire, so that while they did eat the blood ran about their teeth. When they had filled their bellies and quenched their thirst with milk they went forward upon their road and about evening climbed a little hill, under which, Thermuthis said, was the village, and in it Thyamis, being taken in the battle, was either kept prisoner or slain, as he conjectured. Thereupon Cnemon made an excuse that his belly was troubled with too much meat and that by reason of the milk he craved to void his food, and therefore he desired Thermuthis to go afore and he would by and by overtake him. This he did once or twice or three times, so that he seemed to be dealing truly, and affirmed that he had much ado to overtake him.

After he had thus made the Egyptian accustomed to his absence, at last without his knowledge he tarried behind and ran as fast as he could into a very thick wood at the bottom of the hill. As for Thermuthis, when he reached the top he sat him down on a stone to rest, tarrying until the evening came, when they had appointed to go into the village and find in what state Thyamis was, and therewithal he looked about for Cnemon, to whom, if he came after him, he devised to do some harm. For he had not yet left his conceived opinion that he had slain Thisbe; and therefore now he bethought himself how he might kill him in return; and afterward he was with a certain madness moved

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

to set upon Theagenes. But when Cnemon appeared not, and it was now far in the night, he fell asleep, and with the biting of an asp, having gotten a death like to all his past life, by the ladies of destiny's pleasure perhaps, he slept his deadly and last sleep. But Cnemon, after he had forsaken Thermuthis, left not running till dark night restrained his violent course, so that in the place where night overtook him he hid himself and laid as many leaves as he could upon him. Under which he lying was much troubled and slept but little, supposing every noise, and blast of wind, and wagging of each leaf to be Thermuthis. If at any time sleep came over him, he thought that he still fled, and looked back for him that pursued him not. And when he had lust for sleep he would refrain, for the dreams that came to him were worse than the reality. Last of all, he seemed to be angry with the night and thought it was longer than any other was. And when, to his delight, he saw the day dawn, first he cut off so much of his hair as he had let grow that he might be like the thieves, in order that those who met him now might not trouble nor suspect him. For the thieves, besides other things that they do, whereby they may seem more fearful, let their hair grow long over their eyes and shake it hanging on their shoulders ; knowing well that long hair maketh lovers more acceptable but thieves more terrible.

When therefore Cnemon had cut off so much of his hair as would make him seem the more trim, and not be thought one of the thieves, he made haste to go to Chemmis, where he had appointed to meet with Theagenes. And being now come to the Nile and ready to pass over, he spied an old man walking on the bank up and down, who seemed to communicate

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

some of his cogitations with the flood : he had long hair after a holy fashion and very white, a rough beard somewhat long, his cloak and other apparel like a Grecian. Cnemon therefore waited a little, but when the old man passed up and down divers times and seemed not to see any man by him—he was in such a muse and sure cogitation—he came before him and said ‘ All hail, sir.’ ‘ I cannot,’ quoth he, for fortune will not allow.’ Whereat Cnemon marvelled and said ‘ Are you a Greek, or a stranger, or from what land ? ’ ‘ Neither a Greek,’ answered he, ‘ nor a stranger, but of this country, an Egyptian.’ ‘ How then happeneth it,’ said Cnemon, ‘ that in your apparel you imitate the Greeks.’ ‘ My miseries,’ said he, ‘ have brought me this change of handsome apparel.’ Cnemon marvelled that any man should trim and deck himself because of his miseries, and was fain to know the cause and manner thereof. ‘ From Troy you bear me,’ said the old man, quoting from the poet, ‘ and stir up against yourself a very swarm of troubles and an endless tale. But whither be you going, young sir, or from whence come you, or how happeneth it that you speak Greek in Egypt ? ’ ‘ That were a merry jest indeed,’ said Cnemon ; ‘ you were asked first and have told me no part of your estate and yet now you would know mine of me.’ ‘ Well,’ said the old man, ‘ you seem to be a Greek, although some fortune hath changed your outward dress, and it appears that you desire earnestly to hear in what state I am. My sorrows in truth crave of themselves utterance, and if I had not happened on you I think I should have done as the man in the story and told them to these reeds. Let us therefore leave these banks of Nile itself too, for the border of this bank is not fit to tell a long tale in, since it is subject to the vehement heat of the south

sun. Let us go to the village that we see over against us, if you have no greater business, and there you shall be my guest, not in mine own house, but in a very good man's, who hath entertained me in adversity. In his house you shall hear all my fortune, if you will, and in like manner you shall tell me yours.' 'Content,' said Cnemon; 'for if I had not met with you, I still must have gone to this village, to tarry there by appointment for some of my companions.'

They took a boat then—whereof there was great store, ready to transport any man for hire—and came into the village, and so into the house wherein the old man was hosted. The good man of the house was not at home, but his daughter, now marriageable, and the other maids, as many as were within, entertained them very courteously and entreated the old man as though he had been their father. For so, I think, their master had commanded. One washed their feet and swept the dust from about their legs, another made their bed and provided a soft lodging for them, another brought in the pot and made a fire, another covered the table and set wheaten bread thereon and divers other kinds of fruits. Whereat Cnemon marvelled and said: 'Perchance, father, we are come into hospitable Jupiter's house; so much are we regarded and that with so good mind.' 'Not into Jupiter's,' saith he, 'but into such a man's as doth worship well the Jupiter of strangers and those that be in adversity. For he also sometimes passes his life travelling as a merchant and knoweth the manners and fashions of divers nations. For which cause, it is likely, he now entertaineth me in his house, wandering a few days ago and travelling about, as also he hath done to many more others.' 'What travel' said Cnemon, 'is this of which you speak, father?' 'I am

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

in this place,' said he, ' bereft of my children by robbers, knowing the misdoers well, but cannot be revenged. Wherefore I with wailing beweep my sorrow, like a bird whose nest a dragon pulleth down and devoureth her young before her face, and she is afraid to come nigh, neither can she flee away : at such controversy is love and sorrow in her. But making great noise she flieth about the miserable siege, and poureth in vain her motherlike and humble tears into those cruel ears which have of nature been taught no mercy.' ' Will you then,' said Cnemon, ' tell me how and when you had this cruel hap ? ' ' Hereafter I will ' said he ; ' but now it is time to look to our bellies ; which Homer regarding not without good consideration called ' pernicious,' since in comparison therewith all things else are counted of little worth. But first, according to the wisdom of the Egyptians, let us do sacrifice to the immortal gods. For nothing shall ever cause me to break this custom ; neither shall any grief be so great which shall cause me to put the remembrance and service of God out of my mind.'

When he said thus, he poured a little clean water out of a vial—for this was his wonted drink—and said : ' I do sacrifice to the gods of this country and to the gods of Greece, to Apollo of Delphi, and to Theagenes and Chariclea besides, good and honest creatures whom I count also as gods.' And therewithal he wept, as as though he would do another sacrifice to them with sorrowful tears. When Cnemon heard this he was astonished, and looked the old man earnestly up and down. ' What say you,' quoth he, ' are Theagenes and Chariclea in truth your children ? ' ' They are my children,' said he, ' born without a mother. The gods made them my children by chance, the travail

of my heart brought them to birth, my love for them has taken the place of nature, and because thereof they esteemed me their father and called me so. But, I pray you, tell me how you knew them.' 'I do not only know them,' said Cnemon, 'but I tell you that they be safe and in good health.' 'O Apollo and the rest of the gods,' said he; 'tell me in what country they be; and I will call you then my saviour and make equal account of you as with the gods.' 'What reward,' said he, 'will you give me?' 'For the moment,' said he, 'thanks; which a wise man counteth a goodly reward. And if you come into my country, which the gods tell me shall be shortly, you shall have great riches.' 'You promise me,' said he, 'that which is to come and is very uncertain, but you could sufficiently recompense me now.' 'If you see anything here' said he, 'tell me: I am ready to give you even a part of my body.' 'You need not be maimed of any of your members,' replied Cnemon: 'I shall think I have my full reward if you will tell me of them, whence they are, who be their parents, and what fortune they have had.' 'Thou shalt have a great reward,' answered he, 'and such a one as to it nothing may be comparable, even if you had asked for all the treasure in the world. But let us now eat some food. For both of us shall have need of longer time, as well you to hear as I to tell.'

When therefore they had eaten of nuts, figs, fresh gathered dates, and such other fruit as the old man was accustomed to feed on—for he never killed any living creature for food—they drank, he water and Cnemon wine. And after a little while Cnemon said: 'Father, you know well how Bacchus takes pleasure in tales and banqueting songs: wherefore now, seeing he hath made me of his company, he moveth me with

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

desire to hear somewhat, and constraineth me to crave my promised reward. Now it is time for you, as the saying goes, to bring your play on to the stage.'

' You shall hear it,' said he ; ' I only wish that thrifty Nausicles were here too, whom I have often by divers delays deluded, being very desirous to hear this tale.' When Cnemon heard Nausicles named, he asked where he was then. ' He is gone a hunting,' quoth the old man. ' What manner of hunting ? ' said he. ' Of wild beasts,' replied the other, ' very cruel, which be called indeed men and herdsmen, who live by theft and can hardly be trapped, for that they use the marsh as their den and cave.' ' Whereof doth he accuse them ? ' said he. ' Of the taking away of a leman of his,' he answered, ' whom he brought from Athens, one called Thisbe.' ' Lord God,' said Cnemon ; and therewithal suddenly held his peace, as though he would say no more. When the old man asked him what he ailed, Cnemon, willing to bring him to other matters, said : ' I marvel how or by what army emboldened he durst set upon them.' ' Oroondates,' he answered, ' has just now been made deputy of Egypt by the Great King, and by his commandment Mitrane, captain of the watch, is appointed governor of this town. Nausicles hired him with a great sum of money, and with great company of horsemen and footmen conducted him against them. He taketh in very ill part the loss of that maid of Athens, not only because she was his mistress and played well on instruments, but also because he was in mind to carry her to the King of Ethiopia, as he said, that she might be his wife's drinking gossip and familiar after the manner of the Greeks. So, as though he were deprived of the great sum of money which he hoped to have for her, he maketh all provision possible to recover her again.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

I myself also advised and exhorted him so to do, thinking that he might by some chance find my children and help me to them again.' 'We have talked enough,' said Cnemon interrupting him, 'of herdsmen, captains, and kings. You almost have diverted my mind to think of other matters, but this is but a by-the-way story and appertains nothing to Bacchus, as the proverb hath it. Wherefore return your talk now to what you promised. For I have found you like Proteus of Pharos, not indeed turning yourself into false changing shapes, as he did, but attempting to turn me from my purpose.' 'You shall know all,' said the old man; 'but first I will tell you briefly of myself, not beguiling you in my tale, as you think, but propounding such talk as shall be true and well agreeing to that which followeth.'

'The city wherein I was born is called Memphis; my father's name, and mine also, is Calasiris. As touching my trade of life, I am now a vagabond, who was not long ago a priest. I had a wife by the ordinance of the city, but lost her by the law of nature. After she had passed out of this body into another rest, I lived a while free from trouble, delighting myself with the two sons that I had by her. But after a few years the course of heaven prescribed by destiny altered all my estate and Saturn cast his eye upon my house, changing everything for the worse, a change which my own wisdom warned me of but showed me no means to escape. For a man can foresee the unchanging decrees of fate although he cannot avoid the same. Yet even in such matters foresight is gain, in so much as it blunts the keen edge of calamity. For those miseries, my son, that come on thee suddenly are intolerable, but such as are foreseen are borne with a tranquil mind; since the mind being occupied with

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

fear is distressed by those and taketh them heavily, while familiarity with reason maketh these more endurable. Such a thing as this then it was that happened to me. A woman of Thrace, of ripe years and, except Chariclea, the fairest woman in the world, whose name was Rhodopis, I know not whence or how to her lovers' ill fortune leaving her own country, travelled over all Egypt and came in very wanton wise to Memphis. She had a great sort of maids and servants waiting on her and was very perfectly instructed in all the enticements of Venus and wanton behaviour, so that it was possible for none that looked on her not to be entangled with her love: of such an unavoidable force was the whorish allurement that proceeded from her eyes. She entered into the temple of Isis often, whose priest I was, and worshipped the goddess daily and offered divers sacrifices and gifts which cost many talents. At last—I am ashamed to tell it, yet I will—with often beholding of her she overcame me and that temperance also which in all my life with great study I had conserved. A great while I withstood the eyes of my body with the inward eyes of my mind, but overcome at length with this affection of love, as those who are heavy laden, I was constrained to yield. When therefore I understood that this woman was the beginning of all the ill luck which the gods had appointed for me, of which I was not ignorant before, and perceived that she was but a cloak for destiny, and that the god, whose turn it was then to rule, had taken upon himself her shape, I determined not to dishonest the priesthood, in which from my youth I had been brought up, nor yet to defile the temples and secret places of the gods. Therefore, not for doing the deed—which God forbid—but to punish my desire with convenient punishment

I called my reason in to judgment, and passing upon myself sentence of banishment, unhappy man, I left my country, as well to yield to the necessity of the ladies of destiny and give them leave to determine of me what they would as also to escape from the accursed Rhodopis. For I was afraid that if the evil star then in the ascendant pressed too hard upon me I should be forced to do some viler thing. But the chief cause above all others that banished me were my sons ; for the secret wisdom, that I had of the gods, foreshowed to me that they would fight a bloody battle between themselves. That I might therefore remove such a cruel spectacle from my eyes—which I think the sun himself would not behold—and to acquit these fatherly eyes of the sight of my sons' death, I went my way to prevent these things, pretending as though I would go to great Thebes, to see my elder son, who was then with his grandfather, his name being Thyamis.' Cnemon started when he heard the name of Thyamis ; but he kept his counsel, as well as he could, the better to hear the rest : and the old man went on as followeth. ' I omit that which happened to me on the way, young sir, for it nothing appertaineth to that you ask for. But when I heard there was a certain city of Greece sacred to Apollo, which was a temple of the gods and a college of wise men and far from the troublous resort of the common people, I went thither, thinking that a city which was dedicated to holiness and ceremonies was a meet place for a man being a prophet to resort unto. So when I had sailed through the Crissaean gulf and was arrived at Cirrha I went in haste out of my ship to the town : whither after I was come I heard a divine voice in very truth address me ; and for other reasons also it seemed a meet place for me to abide in, not the

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

least whereof was the natural situation of the same. For Parnassus reacheth over it, like a natural defence or tower, inclosing the city as it were with a wall with his two tops.' ' You say very well,' quoth Cnemon, ' and like one who indeed has tasted of Pytho's spirit ; for I remember that my father told me that such was the situation of the place, when the Athenians sent him to the council of the Amphictyons.' ' Are you then an Athenian my son ? ' ' Yea, sir,' said Cnemon. ' What is your name ? ' ' Cnemon,' answered he ; ' but you shall hear all my story later ; now go on with your tale.' ' I will,' answered the other. ' I went then into the city and praised it much in my mind, for the places of exercise there, and the springs, and the fountain of Castalia ; wherein I dipped my fingers and, this done, went to the temple. For the report of the people that said the prophetess would give answer presently moved me so to do. As soon as I had gone into the shrine and said my prayers and made a certain secret request of the god the Pythia answered me thus :

*' To shun the destinies sure decree
Thou takest all this toil ;
And therefore leavest the fruitful coast
Of Nilus' fertile soil.
Have a good heart, for I will give
The blackish fields again
Of Egypt unto thee : till then
Our friend thou shalt remain.'*

As soon as the oracle had given me this answer, I fell grovelling on the altar, and desired him in all things to be my good god. A great company of those that stood by me praised the god much for giving me such an answer at my first coming ; they talked of my good fortune and paid me all manner of regard, saying that I was the welcomest man to the god that

ever came there, save only one Lycurgus of Sparta. Wherefore, when I desired to dwell in the temple precinct, they gave me leave, and decreed that I should be nourished at their common charges. To be short, I wanted no good thing. Either I enquired into the causes and manner of the sacrifices, which were very many, offered both by the men who inhabit there and by strangers also ; or else I conferred with philosophers, of whom no small number come hither, so that the city is in a manner a study dedicated to prophecy, under the god who is captain of the Muses. And at first there were divers questions touching many matters moved among us. For some would ask after what fashion we Egyptians honoured our gods, and another, why divers countries worshipped divers kinds of beasts, and what was the reason in each case. Others enquired of the structure of the pyramids and of those winding vaults in which our kings are buried. In a word they left nothing that appertaineth to Egypt unsearched. For Grecian ears are wonderfully delighted with tales of Egypt. At last certain of the civilest sort fell in talk concerning the Nile, and asked me whence his sources came, and what special property he had above other rivers, and why he alone of all others in summer did rise. I told them what I knew, and was written in the holy books, and was lawful only for priests to read and know : how that his source was in the highest parts of Ethiopia and furthest bounds of all Libya, at the end of the east clime and beginning of the south. It floweth in the summer not, as some think, by reason of contrary blasts of the north-west winds, but because these same winds, blowing out of the north, gather together and drive all the clouds of the air about mid-summer into the south, till they come to the burning line. There

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

their violence is abated, by reason of the incredible heat thereabouts, so that all the moisture, which was before gathered together and congealed, melteth and is resolved into abundance of water : wherewith the Nile waxeth proud and will be a river no longer, but runneth over his banks and covereth Egypt with his waters, as with a sea, and maketh the ground very fruitful. Wherefore too it giveth sweet waters to drink, since they come from heaven, and is pleasant to be touched, not now so hot as at the first but yet luke-warm, as one that riseth in such a place. For which cause from that flood, and none other, arise no vapours ; for if there did, then were it likely that it received its increase from melted snow ; of which opinion some learned men of the Greeks have been.

' As I talked of these matters in this sort, Charicles, the priest of Apollo, my familiar friend said unto me : ' It is very well said of you, and I myself am of your opinion also, for I have heard the priests that dwell by the Nile cataracts say the same.' ' Have you been there then, Charicles ? ' said I. ' I have ' quoth he, ' wise Calasiris.' ' What business sent you thither ? ' I asked him then. ' The ill-luck that I had at home,' said he, ' which for all that turned to my great felicity.' I wondered at that, how it could be. ' You will not marvel,' quoth he, ' if you hear the whole process of the matter, which you shall do when you please.' ' Then,' quoth I, ' tell me now, for I am well pleased you should do so.' Charicles then, when he had let the people depart, said : ' Know that for a certain cause I have desired a great while that you might be made privy to my estate. A long time after I was married I had no children. Yet at length, when I was old and had made earnest prayers to God, I had a daughter ; the which God foreshoweth me should be born in an

ill time. She became marriageable, and I provided her a husband of one of her suitors—for she had many—who, in my judgment, was the honestest man. The first night that she, unhappy wench, lay with her husband, she died, either from a thunderbolt, or else, for that by negligent handling her bed was set on fire. And thus the marriage song not yet ended was turned to mourning ; and she was carried out of her bride bed into her grave ; and the torches that gave her light at her wedding did now serve to kindle her funeral fire. Beside this unhappy fortune God gave me another tragical mishap, in that he took her mother from me also, being too sorrowful for her daughter's death. I therefore, unable to bear this great punishment at the gods' hands, did not indeed banish myself from life—obeying herein those divines who say that this is unlawful—but rather banished myself from my native land and fled far from the solitude of my own home. For thus to blot out the memory of the past by a change of scene brings with it forgetfulness.

' I have told you now, my friend, the reason of my wanderings. But I desire that you should know too the principal cause why I tell this tale. After I had travelled over many countries, I came at length into your Egypt and into the city of Catadupi to see the cataracts of the Nile. As I walked about in the city, as my leisure served, and did buy such things as are scarce in Greece—for now by continuance of time having well digested my sorrows I hastened to return into my own country—there came a sober man to me and such a one as by countenance appeared to be wise. He had lately passed his youthful years and was in colour very black and he saluted me and said—not speaking Greek very well—that he would talk with me

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

about a certain matter. And when he saw that I was ready to go with him, he brought me into a certain temple, and by and by said : ‘ I saw you buy certain herbs and roots that grow in India and Ethiopia, and if you are willing to purchase from me simply and without guile, I will show you what I have to sell.’ ‘ Show me then, I pray you ’ quoth I. ‘ I will ’ said he, ‘ but do not be too stingy with your offers.’ ‘ Nay,’ I returned ‘ do not you be too grasping in your price.’ With that he took a little bag from under his arm and showed me certain precious stones of wonderful price. There were pearls among them as big as a little nut, perfect round ; emeralds as green as grass in spring and shining smooth as oil ; sapphires in colour like the sea bank that lieth under a hard rock which makes all that is beneath it to be of like purple colour ; in few words, their mingled and diverse shining colour delighted and pleased the eyes wonderfully. Which as soon as I saw, ‘ You must seek other chapmen,’ quoth I, ‘ good sir ; for I and all my riches are scarce able to buy one of the stones I see.’ ‘ Why,’ said he, ‘ if you are not able to buy them, you will be able to take them if they are given to you.’ ‘ I am able indeed ’ said I, ‘ to receive them, but I know not what you mean so to mock me.’ ‘ I mock you not,’ quoth he, ‘ but mean good faith, and I swear by the god of this shrine that I will give you all these things if you will take them, and another gift beside which far excelleth them all.’ I laughed when I heard this, and he asked me why I laughed. ‘ Because,’ quoth I, ‘ it is a thing to be laughed at, seeing that you promise me things of so great price, and yet assure me to give me more.’ ‘ Trust me,’ said he ; ‘ but swear that you will use this gift well and as I shall teach you.’ I marvelled what he meant and stayed a while ; yet, in hope of those

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

greater rewards I took an oath. After I had sworn as he willed me, he brought me to his lodging and showed me a maid of excellent beauty who, he said, was only seven years old. Methought she was almost marriageable, such grace did excellent beauty give to the tallness of her stature. I stood in amazement, both because I knew not what he meant, and also for the insatiable desire I had to look upon her. Then spake he thus to me—

' Sir, the mother of this maid whom you see, for a certain reason which you shall know hereafter, laid her forth, wrapped in such apparel as is commonly used for such purposes, committing her to the doubtfulness of fortune. I by chance finding her took her up, for it is not lawful to despise and neglect a soul in danger, after it hath once entered into a human body. For this is one of the precepts of those wise teachers that are with us, to be whose scholar myself was once judged worthy. Besides, even in the infant's eyes there appeared something wonderful and divine; with such a steady and amiable countenance did she behold me as I looked upon her. With her was also found this bag of precious stones which I showed you of late, and a silken cloth wrought with letters in her mother's tongue, wherein was her whole history contained, her mother as I guess procuring the same. Which after I had read, I knew whence and what she was, and so I carried her into the country far from the city, and delivered her to certain shepherds to be brought up, charging them to tell no man. As for the things I found with her I kept them myself, lest because of them the maid should be brought into danger. Thus at the first the matter was concealed. But when in process of time the maid grew on and became more fair than other women were—for beauty

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

in my opinion cannot be concealed even under the ground, but would thence also appear—fearing lest her estate should be known, and so she be killed, and I brought into trouble therefrom, I sued and obtained that I might be sent on embassy to the governor of Egypt, and have come now bringing her with me, desirous to set her business in good order. And now must I utter to him the cause of my embassy, for he hath appointed this day for the hearing of me. As touching the maid, I commend her to you and to the gods who have hitherto conserved her, upon such conditions as you are bound by oath to perform. That is, that you will use her as a free woman, and marry her to a free man, as you receive her at my hand, or rather of her mother who so hath left her. I trust that you will perform all things whereon we agreed, both by credit of your oath and the faith I have in your manners, which these many days I have experienced to be very Greekish indeed. Thus much I had to say to you, before I execute the commission of my embassy: as for the other secracies belonging to the maid, I will tell you them to-morrow in more ample wise, if you will meet me about the temple of Isis.'

'I did as he requested, and carried the maid muffled to my own house, and used her very honourably that day, comforting her with many fair means, and gave God great thanks for her, from that time forth accounting and calling her my daughter. The next day I went to the temple of Isis, as I had appointed with the stranger, and after I had walked there a great while alone and saw him not, I went to the governor's house and asked whether any man had seen the legate of Ethiopia. There one told me that he was gone, or rather driven, home the day before at sunset; for the

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

governor had threatened to kill him if he did not immediately depart. I asked him the cause. ‘For that,’ quoth he, ‘by his embassy he willed our governor not to meddle with the mines out of which the emeralds are dug, as belonging to Ethiopia.’ I came home again much grieved, like one that hath some great mishap, since now I could not know anything as touching the maid, neither whence she was, nor who were her parents.’ ‘Marvel not thereat,’ said Cnemon interrupting him, ‘for I myself take it heavily that I cannot know it now: yet perhaps I shall know it hereafter.’ ‘You shall indeed,’ said Calasiris. ‘But now I will tell you what more Charicles said.’

‘After I came back to my house,’ quoth he, ‘the maid came forth to meet me, but said nothing, because she could not yet speak Greek; yet she took me by the hand and made me good cheer with her countenance. I marvelled that even as good greyhounds do fawn upon everyone, though they have but little acquaintance with them, so she quickly perceived my good will toward her and did embrace me as if I had been her father. I determined therefore not to tarry longer at Catadupi, lest some spite of the gods should deprive me of this other daughter too, and so coming by boat down the Nile to the sea I got a ship and sailed home. And now is she my daughter with me here, my daughter I say, named by my name, and on her all my hopes depend. And beside other things, wherein she is better than I could wish, she has quickly learned the Greek tongue and has come to perfect age with such speed as if she had been a peerless branch, and so far doth she surpass every other in excellent beauty that all men’s eyes, as well

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

strangers as Greeks, are set on her. To be short, wherever she is, either at the temples, or at public exercises, or in the places of common resort, she turneth all men's minds and countenances unto her, as if she were the image of some god newly made. But although she be such a one, yet she grieveth me sore. She hath bidden marriage farewell, and determined to live a maiden life ; and so, becoming Diana's servant, she for the most part applieth herself to hunting and doth practice shooting. For my part, I set little by my life. I hoped to marry her to my nephew, my sister's son, a courteous young man, well mannered and fair spoken ; but I can neither by prayer nor promise nor force of argument persuade her thereto. But that which grieveth me most is that—as the proverb says—she useth my own feathers to wing her shafts. The wise arguments that I did once employ in guiding to the choice of a virtuous life she brings up now against me, and commends virginity as a thing divine, placing it in heaven with the gods and calling it immaculate, unspotted, and incorruptible. As for love, the sport of Venus, and all the ceremonies that pertain to marriage, she doth utterly reject them. In this matter I require your help, and therefore now having good occasion, which hath in a manner offered itself to me, I use a longer tale than need requireth. Do this much for me, good Calasiris : use your wisdom or some Egyptian enchantment to persuade her, either by word or deed, to know her own nature and to consider that she is born a woman. This you can do, if you will. For she disdaineth not to talk with men, since she has been commonly brought up among them ; and she dwelleth in the same house as you, here I mean within the circuit and compass of this temple. Despise not mine

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

humble prayers, and suffer me not to live in mine old age without children and comfort and hope of any to succeed me. This I beseech you to do for Apollo's sake and all the gods of your own country.' I wept when I heard this, Cnemon, because he himself not without tears thus humbly besought me, and promised to do what I could for him in this point.'

While we yet talked of these matters, one came to us in haste and told us that the captain of the Aenians' embassy was at the gate and had for some while been urgent, desiring the priest to come and begin the sacrifice. I asked Charicles what those Aenians were, and what holy embassy theirs was, and what sacrifice they made. 'The Aenians' said he, 'are the noblest part of Thessaly and right Greekish. They fetch their pedigree from the Greek Deucalion, and stretch as far as the borders of Malia, their chief city being Hypata, so called, as they say, because it is mistress and ruler of the rest, but as others think because it is situate under Mount Oeta. This sacrifice the Aenians send to Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, every fourth year, at such time as the Pythian games are kept to Apollo—which is now, as you know—for here was Pyrrhus killed at the very altar of Apollo by guile of Orestes, Agamemnon's son. And this present embassy is being done more honourably than any of the rest, because their captain says he is one of Achilles' line. By chance I met him two days ago and there seemeth verily to appear in him somewhat worthy of those that come of Achilles' blood. Such is the comeliness of his person and tallness of stature that it may easily prove he was born of some goddess.' I marvelled how they, being Aenians, did say they came of Achilles' blood—because the Egyptian poet Homer saith that Achilles was born at Phthia—but

FLIGHT FROM THE MARSH

Charicles replied : ‘ The young man and the rest of the Aenians say plainly that he is their progenitor, and that Thetis was married to Peleus out of Malia, and that in old time Phthia was the district round that gulf but that others now because of the glory of the hero do falsely claim that name for themselves. For his own part, he proveth himself to be of Achilles’ blood by another reason : Menesthius his ancestor was the son of Spercheus and Polydora, daughter of Peleus, and went with Achilles among the noble captains to Troy, and because he was his kinsman was one of the chiefest captains of the Myrmidons. But although he himself be very near on every side to Achilles so as to join him close to the Aenians, yet he accounts these funeral offerings to Pyrrhus as the most assured proof of all ; which, as he says, all the Thessalians have yielded to them, bearing them witness that they be the next of his blood.’ ‘ I envy them not, Charicles’ quoth I, ‘ whether they claim this for themselves untruly or it be so indeed. But I pray you send for the captain in, for I desire much to see him.’ Charicles consented, and therewith entered a young man of Achilles’ courage indeed, who in countenance and stomach appeared no less than he. With a straight neck, high foreheaded with his hair in comely sort rebending down, his nose and nostrils wide enough to take breath, which is a token of courage and strength : his eyes not very grey, but grey and black, which made him look somewhat fiercely, and yet very amiably, not much unlike the sea when it is new calmed after a boisterous tempest. After he had saluted us, as the manner is, and we him again : ‘ It is time’ said he, ‘ to do sacrifice to the god, that we may finish the hero’s rites betimes and the pomp belonging thereto.’ ‘ Let it be so,’ said

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Charicles ; and as he rose, he said to me softly : ' You will see Chariclea to-day, if you have not seen her before ; for she must by custom be present at the pomp and funerals of Neoptolemus.' I in truth had seen the maid before, Cnemon, and she used to enquire of me concerning our holy customs and ordinances ; but I said nothing to him, waiting to see what would come hereof, and we went to the temple together. All things belonging to the sacrifice had already been prepared by the Thessalians, and when we came to the altar and the young man, having leave from the priest began to do sacrifice, the Pythia spoke thus :

*' Ye men of Delphi sing of her,
And God's own offspring praise :
Who now in grace begins to grow,
But fame shall end her days.
Who leaving these my temples here,
And passing surging streams
Shall come at last to country scorched
With Phoebus' blazing beams.
Where they as recompenses due,
That virtues rare do gain,
In time to come, ere it be long,
White mitres shall obtain.'*

After the god had said thus, those that stood by cast many doubts, but knew not what the oracle should mean. Every man had his several exposition, and as he desired so he conjectured. But none could attain to the true meaning thereof ; for oracles and dreams for the most part are only understood when they be come to pass. Yet though the men of Delphi were in amaze as to what was said, they hastened to go to this gorgeous solemnity, not caring to make any diligent enquiry regarding the oracle that had been given them.

THE THIRD BOOK

THE FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

'When the pomp and funeral sacrifice was done,' said Calasiris. 'Nay, father,' quoth Cnemon interrupting him, 'it is not done yet, seeing that your talk hath not made me also a looker thereon. You slip from me, who desire wonderfully to behold the whole order thereof, as though I were one who came too late for the feast, as the proverb is, shutting up your theatre as soon as it is opened.' 'Cnemon,' said Calasiris, 'I did not wish to trouble you with such impertinent matters as you now desire, but would have brought you to the principal points of my tale and that which you desired at first. But since you desire to be a looker hereupon by the way, and declare yourself thus to be a true Athenian, I will briefly describe to you the bravery of that feast, as well for itself, because it is famous, as also for certain things that happened thereat. The Hecatomb went before, and such men as were but lately entered into the holy ministry, of rustic dress and life, led the same. Each one had a white robe girt about him, his breast and arm and right hand naked, and a poleaxe therein. All the oxen were black and very lusty, wagging their heads and lifting them up a little, with horns both even and straight, whereof some were gilded and others had

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

garlands of flowers upon them. Their legs were somewhat crooked, and their dewlaps hung below their knees, and there were just so many of them as would make an exact hecatomb in deed. After them followed a great sort of other offerings, every kind of beast being led by itself alone, with a pipe and flute to appoint when and with what they should begin. These beasts and their leaders were welcomed by certain virgins of Thessaly, arrayed in fair deep-girded robes, with their hair loose about their ears. The maids were divided into two companies, of which those who were in the first carried baskets full of flowers and fruit, the others bore trays of sweetmeats and perfumes and filled all the place with pleasant odour. They carried these things not in their hands but on their heads, and held hands together forward and backward in line, so that they might the more easily move in the dance. They received their song from another company, for it was the duty of these to sing the whole hymn. In this song was Thetis praised and Peleus, and then their son, and lastly his. After these maidens, Cnemon,—‘ Nay,’ quoth Cnemon breaking in, ‘ why do you rob me of the pleasantest part of the tale by not rehearsing to me their song, as though I were only a spectator of what was done in their pomp and not a hearer also ? ’ ‘ Well,’ said Calasiris, ‘ seeing it is your pleasure, you shall hear it : this was the song—

*O Nereus, god of surging seas
We praise thy daughter here
Whom Peleus at the strong command
Of love did make his dear.
Thou art our lady Venus brave,
In sea a glimpsing star ;
Who thee, Achilles, did bring forth
A very Mars in war.*

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

*A captain good unto the Greeks
Thy glory scales the skies ;
To thee did thy red headed wife
Cause Pyrrhus rough to rise,
The Trojans' utter overthrow,
But stay to Greekish host ;
Be thou, good Pyrrhus, unto us
A favourable ghost.
Who here in grave entombed liest
In Phoebus' sacred ground,
Bow down thy ear to the holy hymns
That we to thee do sound.
And this our city suffer not
In any fear to be.
Of thee and Thetis is our song—
Thetis, all hail to thee.'*

'Thus was the song made, Cnemon, as far as I remember. And there was so good order in the song, and the measure of their dancing agreed so well with the sound of the music, that men's eyes neglected what they saw in comparison with what they heard, and those that stood by followed the maids as they passed on, as though they had been constrained with the pleasantness of their song, until the jolly lusty youths with their captain and ringleader appeared, the sight whereof was better than all description. The whole number of these youths was fifty, which was divided into twice five and twenty, each party arrayed about their captain, who rode in the midst of them. Their boots wrought of purple leather were folded finely a little above their ankles. Their cloaks were white, fastened with buckles of gold before their breasts, with a border of blue around the nethermost hem. Their horses all came out of Thessaly, and by their pleasant countenances showed the good pasturage of their country. They foamed on their bits, as though they thought scorn of such as rode upon them, yet they turned very readily as the riders would have them. Their saddles and the rest of their harness was so

beset with silver and gold that in this point the young men seemed to strive who should be bravest. But those who were present, Cnemon, did so despise and pass by these men thus apparelléd, and look on the captain Theagenes, on whom was my care set, that all which showed before very bright was now darkened, as it had been by some passing lightning: such brightness did the sight of him bring to our eyes. He was on horse back in heavy armour, a spear of ash pointed with bronze in his hand, bare-headed without a helmet. His cloak was of purple wrought with gold, wherein was the battle of the Centaurs and the Lapiths; on the button of his cloak was Pallas pictured in electrum, bearing a shield before her breast whereon was Gorgon's head. The comeliness and commendation of all that he did was somewhat increased by the easy blowing of the wind, which moved his hair about his neck, and parted it upon his forehead, and made his cloak wave so that the nether parts thereof covered the back and buttocks of his horse. You would have said that his horse was moved by the beauty of his master and knew that he did bear upon him a passing seemly man: in so fine a sort did he rear his neck and with pricked up ears toss his head and roll his eyes fiercely and prance and leap from the ground. When he had the reins a little at his will, he would set forward courageously, and turn about on both sides, and beat the ground with the tips of his hoofs lightly, and moderate his fierceness with the pleasantness of his pace. Each man was amazed thereat, and gave the young man the principal praise, as well for his courage, as for the beauty and comeliness of his person. As for the common sort of women and such as could not moderate their affections, they cast apples and flowers at him, by that means, as

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

might be guessed, seeking to get his favour. For they were all of this opinion, that there could be no human shape which could surmount the seemliness of Theagenes.

' But when Aurora with rosial fingers, as Homer saith, appeared, and the beautiful and wise Chariclea came out of Diana's temple, then we perceived that Theagenes could be conquered, and so far conquered as the pure comeliness of woman's beauty hath more and greater force of attraction than the fairest man. She was carried in a chariot drawn by a yoke of white oxen, and had on a purple gown down to her feet, spangled with gold. She was girded with a girdle, in making whereof the workman bestowed all his craft, in that he never made the like before nor was able to frame such another after. He tied two dragon's tails behind her back between her shoulders, bringing further their contrary necks under her paps with an artificial knot, suffering both their heads to hang down after it was fastened about her. You would have said the serpents did not seem to creep but crept indeed. They were not fearful with their terrible looks, but seemed as though they had been wantonly asleep. As touching their matter, they were gold, but in colour blue-black. For the gold by art was darkened that black and gold mingled together might represent the roughness and diversity of the scales. Such was the maid's girdle. Her hair was neither all bound up nor all loose. The most part thereof that grew behind hung over her shoulders ; that which grew from the crown of her head downward to her forehead, being fair in colour and like to roses, was crowned with a garland of young laurel, which did not suffer the whole to be blown more than was seemly by the vehemence of the wind. In her left hand she bore a

gilded bow, and a quiver of arrows hung on her right shoulder, while in her left hand was a burning taper, and, though she was so attired, there came a brighter light from her eyes than from the taper. ‘These same are Theagenes and Chariclea indeed,’ said Cnemon. Calasiris thinking he had spied them somewhere asked him : ‘Where be they ? Show me them for God’s sake.’ ‘Methought, father,’ said the other, ‘I saw them, not being here ; so well did you describe them even as I remember once to have seen.’ ‘I cannot tell,’ quoth Calasiris, ‘whether you saw them so attired as on that day all Greece and the sun himself did see them. So fair and so happy were they that every man desired her for wife and every woman him for husband. The union of the twain they counted like to an immortal thing ; albeit the people of the country praised the young man more, and the Thessalians the maid, both marvelling especially at that which they had not seen before. For a new countenance and seldom seen doth more move the mind than one wherewith we are daily acquainted. But O delectable deceit, O acceptable opinion ! How thou didst comfort me, Cnemon, when I hoped that you had seen my dear children and wouldest have shown them to me ! But thou goest about utterly to deceive me. For you promised me at the first that they would come by and by, and as reward obtained from me this tale of them ; but yet you cannot show me them now, although the evening approach and it be dark night.’ ‘Be content,’ quoth he, ‘and fear not : they will come without doubt. Perhaps there is some let and hinderance that they come not so soon as was appointed between us ; but even if they were here, I would not show you them until I had the whole reward you promised me

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

Wherfore if you desire to see them in haste, perform what you promised and make an end of your unfinished tale.' 'I am very unwilling,' quoth the other, 'to do that which bringeth me in mind of that which grieveth me much ; and I supposed too that you were weary of this my so long prattling. But since you are so desirous to hear and can never be wearied with a good tale, go to, let us proceed whence we left off. Yet first let us light a lamp and do sacrifice to the gods that govern in the night, that having performed the accustomed ceremonies we may lie here quietly and tell forward our tale.'

He said this, and straightway a maid brought in a lighted lamp, and he finished his sacrifice, and called upon divers of the gods and especially on Mercury, and desired to have some happy dream that night, praying humbly that his dearly beloved children might appear unto him in his sleep. And when he had done all this, he went on with his tale thus—
‘ After the young men had gone three times around the tomb of Neoptolemus, the women cried out piteously and the men made a strange noise. Therewith suddenly all the oxen, rams, and goats were killed, as if they had been slain at one stroke. Last of all, when the altar, being of wonderful greatness, had very many cloven logs laid upon it, and all manners of lawful offerings were added thereto, they made request that Apollo's priest might begin the sacrifice and set fire to the altar. Charicles said that the sacrifice indeed appertained to him, but that the captain of the holy legation should take the torch from her that was president of these ceremonies and set the altar on fire : for so was the fashion of the country. This he said, and did sacrifice, and Theagenes took the

torch. Surely, Cnemon, we may know by its deeds and workings that the mind is a heavenly thing and hath close affinity with the higher nature. For as soon as the young people saw each other, at the same moment they loved each other, as though the soul recognised its fellow and hastened towards its destined mate. At the first they stood still suddenly, as if in amaze. Then she slowly handed him the torch, and he likewise received it, viewing one another with steady eyes, as if either had seen or known the other before and was now trying to remember where. This done, they smiled a little, but secretly, so that it could hardly be perceived save by the softness of their glance. Afterwards, as though they were ashamed of what they did, they blushed ; and then, within a while, when this affection, as I think, had gripped their hearts, they became pale. In a word, a thousand looks appeared on their faces in a short time, and the changing of all kind of colour and the rolling of their eyes plainly betokened the troubles in their mind. The people who were present, as may be guessed, perceived nothing of this, because every one was thinking of other matters ; nor did Charicles, who at that time repeated the usual prayer. But I did nothing but mark the young couple, for I was moved to suspect what should come to pass by conjecture of their names, after what the oracle had said of Theagenes, when he was doing sacrifice in the temple. Yet I knew nothing exactly of what was signified in the latter part of the oracle.

When at length, and as it were by force, Theagenes had drawn away from the maid and with his torch set fire to the altar, the procession broke up and the Thessalians went to banqueting, while all the other people went every man to his own house. Chariclea

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

also, putting on a white cloak, went with a few of her familiars to her own chamber, which was within the compass of the temple. For she dwelt not with her supposed father, but in her desire of chastity altogether separated herself from him. I being now made more curious by reason of that which I had heard and seen came of set purpose to meet Charicles. ‘Did you see Chariclea,’ he asked, ‘my joy and the honour of the people of Delphi?’ ‘This was not the first time,’ I replied, ‘I have met her often before in the temple, and that too not as a chance acquaintance. She has done sacrifice many times with me, and she has asked and learned from me of any point she doubted, either of divine or human matters.’ ‘How liked you her to-day?’ quoth he ‘Did she give some fresh splendour to the pomp?’ ‘Marry, sir Charicles,’ said I, ‘you seem to ask me whether the moon exceeds any whit the lesser stars.’ ‘Well,’ he answered, ‘some folk praised the Thessalian youth also.’ ‘Yea,’ said I, ‘they gave him the second or the third place; but all acknowledged your daughter to be the principal sight and the very eye of the pomp.’ Charicles was well pleased with this—and I began now to draw to my purpose, especially desiring that he should be of good heart and doubt nothing—and smiling a little he said: ‘I go to her now: if it please you, come with me and let us see if this great company has been at all annoying to her.’ I was very glad of this request; yet I made as though I had other business to do, but was content to leave that and go with him.

When we came where she was and had gone into her chamber, we found her sick on her bed, quite distraught, and all her eyes bedewed with love drops. After she had embraced her father, as her manner was,

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

he asked her what she ailed. She made him answer that her head did ache, and that she would fain sleep if she might. Charicles, much grieved at this, went out of her chamber with me, and commanded the maids to make as little noise as might be, and when he came before his own house he said : ‘ What should this mean, good Calasiris ? What disease hath my dear daughter ? ’ ‘ Marvel not,’ quoth I, ‘ if she, having shewn herself in such a company, hath been spied by some spiteful eye.’ He smiled at this and said in jesting wise : ‘ You then, as men commonly do, believe in witchcraft.’ ‘ Yea marry,’ quoth I, ‘ as much as I believe in anything that is true ; and that for this reason. The air which is about us on every side, entering into us by our eyes, nostrils, mouth and other pores, carrying with it such outward qualities as it is endued withal, doth ingraft a like infection in them who have received it. For which cause, when a man hath enviously looked upon any excellent thing, forthwith he hath filled the air with that pestilent quality, and sent forth also a poisoned breath to that which is near at hand. The same air, being a slender and subtle thing, pierceth even to the bones and very marrow, and by that means envy hath been cause to many of the disease which we call by its proper name ‘ bewitching.’ Consider also, Charicles, how many have gotten sore eyes, and the plague, though they neither touched those that had such diseases, nor ate at their table, nor lay in their beds, but only by being in the same air. Let love, if anything, be a proof of this, who taketh his beginning and occasion from something which is seen, and then his passion, as though wind borne, shoots through the eyes and into the heart. And this is like to be true. For seeing that of all our other pores and senses sight is

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

the hottest and the most easily moved, it must needs receive such infections as are about it, and by its own hot spirit draw to itself the changing phases of love. If need be also I can bring for example's sake some reasons out of the holy books, gathered from the consideration of nature. The curlew healeth those that have the king's evil ; which bird flieth away as soon as any that hath this disease hath spied her, and turneth her tail toward him, shutting her eyes. Not, as some say, because she would not help him, but that in looking upon him she draweth that evil disease unto her by nature, and therefore she declineth such sight as a present peril. Perhaps you have heard too how the basilisk, with his only breath and look, doth dry up and corrupt all that it passeth by. And it is no wonder if some do bewitch such as they hold most dear and wish best unto ; for seeing that they be envious by nature, they do, not what they wish, but what by nature is appointed.'

After he had waited a while, he said : ' You have discussed this question right wisely and with very probable arguments. I would to God that she might feel at length what affection and love meaneth : then I would not think that she were sick but in most perfect health ; and you know I have craved your help to bring this about. But now nothing less than this is to be feared to have happened to her, who hateth her bed and will be won by no love, but seemeth rather to be bewitched indeed. But I doubt not but you will undo this witchcraft, because of your singular wisdom and the friendship which is betwixt us.' I promised him then, if I could perceive her grief, to help her what I could.

While we yet talked of these matters, one came to us in haste and said : ' Good sirs, you make such

tarriance, as if you were called to a battle or skirmish and not to a banquet. The maker thereof is Theagenes, and great Neoptolemus is the president of the same. Come then, neither let the banquet through your default be continued till night, seeing that none but you are now absent.' 'This fellow,' quoth Charicles to me in mine ear, 'biddeth us with a cudgel in his hand. How little like the Bacchic god is he, albeit he is well soaked already. But let us go; for it is to be doubted lest, if we tarry, he will drive us forward with blows.' 'You jest,' said I; 'but let us go.' When we came, Theagenes placed Charicles beside himself, and honoured me also somewhat for his sake. Why do I trouble you now with telling how the maids danced, and what instruments were there, and how the young youths danced the dance called Pyrrhica in armour, and other things also; wherewith Theagenes had mingled fine and delicate meats, ordering his banquet as if it had been a merry drinking party. But that which is needful for you to hear and pleasant for me to tell is this. Theagenes set a merry countenance on the matter, and strained himself wonderfully that he might entertain his guests courteously and make them good cheer. But I perceived whereto his mind was bent by the rolling of his eyes and sudden sighing without cause. Sometimes he was sad and in a muse; then straightway, as though he knew his own fault and would correct himself, he would be merry; to be short, he changed his countenance a thousand ways. For the mind of a lover, as of a drunken man, is flexible and can tarry in no certain state, both, as it were, swimming in a moist affection. And for this reason a lover will soon be drunk, and a drunken man soon in love. By his sorrowful gaping and careful countenance all those who were there presently saw

that he was not well. Even Charicles noticed his change of looks, and said to me softly : ‘ Hath some envious eye looked upon him also ? Methinks that he and Chariclea have the same disease.’ ‘ They have indeed, by Isis,’ said I ; ‘ and not without cause, since in the procession next to her he was the fairest person.’ Thus talked we. But when the cups began to go about, Theagenes drank to every man, although against his will, for courtesy’s sake. When he came to me, I said that I thanked him for his gentle offer, but did not drink. He, thinking I had despised him, looked at me angrily with burning eyes. Which as soon as Charicles perceived he said : ‘ This man drinketh no wine nor eateth of the flesh of any living thing.’ He asked : ‘ Why ? ’ ‘ He is,’ quoth he, ‘ an Egyptian, born at Memphis, a priest of Isis.’ When Theagenes heard that I was an Egyptian and a priest, he conceived a wonderful pleasure and stretched himself for joy, as those who have found some great treasure, and called for water, and after he had drunk a good draught, he said : ‘ Right wise man, I have drunk to you of that which you like best, and I pray you let this table make a lasting league of amity between us.’ ‘ May it be so, worthy Theagenes,’ said I ; ‘ I have a good while desired the same.’ So receiving it from his hand I did drink, and with such talk we made an end of the banquet and went everyone to his own lodging. But Theagenes embraced me very lovingly and with kisses, both oftener and more familiarly than our former acquaintance suffered. After I came home I slept not the first part of the night, thinking of the young couple and studying diligently what the latter part of the oracle should mean. When it was midnight, I saw Apollo and Diana, as I thought —if indeed it was thought and not rather truth —and

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

he delivered Theagenes to me and she Chariclea. Then calling me by my name : ‘ It is time,’ they said, ‘ that you return to your country ; for so the ladies of destiny command. Go therefore hence thyself and take these with thee, and love them as thine own children, and bring them out of Egypt whither and how it shall please the gods.’ When they had said this they went away, giving first a token that it was not a dream that I saw but a thing done in deed. I understood all the rest as I had seen it, but into what country or to what people they should be carried I could not tell.’ ‘ You will tell me hereafter, father,’ quoth Cnemon, ‘ if you know yourself. But how mean you that the gods were shewn to you not in your sleep, but manifestly appeared.’ ‘ Even so, my son,’ quoth he, ‘ as wise Homer in a riddle did signify ; although many let the hardness of the saying pass. For he saith somewhere :

*‘ Quickly I knew the marks
Of his fair feet.
For God’s are easy known
When men they meet.’*

‘ I myself seem to be one of that sort of people,’ said Cnemon. Perhaps it was to reprove me, Calasiris, that you have made mention of these verses, the words whereof I well remember since the time I first learned them ; but that there was divinity contained in them I knew not.’ Calasiris waited a little, making ready to tell him the secret meaning, and said : ‘ The gods and other heavenly powers, Cnemon, coming and going from us, change themselves seldom into the likeness of other creatures but commonly into men, that we, supposing by the likeness of their figure that what we saw was a dream, may be so beguiled. But

although the rude and profane people know them not, yet can they not escape the wise man. He will know them either by their eyes, in that they look steadfastly and never shut their eyelids ; or better still by their gait, in that they move not their feet nor set one foot before another, but are carried by some force and unchecked power through the air, rather sliding through than striding over the winds. Wherefore the Egyptians make the images of their gods with their feet joined together and not separated asunder. Which thing the skilful Homer, like an Egyptian and one well instructed in the holy doctrine, secretly and closely signified in his verses, leaving them to be understood by such as had the power. Of Pallas he speaketh thus :

‘Also her terrible eyes did glister as she looked’
And of Poseidon thus :

‘His footprints as he went easily I knew’—meaning that he went, as it were, with a swimming gait ; for the word ‘easily’ goes with ‘went,’ not, as some folk wrongly have imagined, with ‘I knew.’

‘You have initiated me well, sir, into these mysteries,’ said Cnemon ; but when you often call Homer an Egyptian—a thing which no one has ever heard of—though I may not disbelieve you, yet I marvel, and beg you now to discuss this question also.

‘It is nothing near to our purpose,’ said the other, ‘to talk of such things, but yet I will briefly tell you. Homer by divers reports may be ascribed to divers countries, and indeed to the wise man no country comes amiss. But to tell the truth, he was our countryman, an Egyptian born in Thebes of the hundred gates, and his father was putatively a prophet but in reality the god Hermes, in whose temple the father

served. For when his mother was doing certain sacrifices after the manner of the country she fell asleep in the temple and the god lay with her and engendered Homer. Who indeed had about him token of unlawful generation, for on both his thighs from birth there grew a great deal of hair. Wherefrom, as he travelled in Greece and other countries reciting his poems, he got his name. He himself would neither tell his name, nor his country, nor kindred ; therefore those who knew the quality of his body gave him a name therefrom.' 'To what end, father,' quoth Cnemon, 'would he not tell his country ?' 'Either,' said he, 'he was ashamed of his banishment—for he was driven out of his country by his father when the time came for him to become a priest, being known then to be a bastard by reason of the mark on his body—or else he concealed his country from policy, in order that he might lawfully say he was born everywhere.' 'Your words seem to me very true and wise,' said Cnemon ; 'for when I consider Homer's verse it is truly of Egyptian fashion, stuffed with all pleasure and delectation ; while as for his natural excellence, he would not so far surpass all other men had he not some tincture of the divine in him. But when you perceived in true Homeric fashion that your visitors were gods, tell me, Calasiris, what happened next.' 'Just such things as had been before, Cnemon ; I slept little, devised much, and fell into such cogitations as liketh the night well. I rejoiced to think that I had found something I had not expected, and looked forward gladly to returning to my own country. Yet was I sorrowful that Charicles should lose his daughter. I thought how I should carry the young folks away with me, and what means were to be devised for our departure. I was

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

troubled too as touching this same, how we might do it privily and to what place we should go, and whether by sea or land. Indeed a thousand restless thoughts arose in my head and I slept no more that night.

' It was scarcely day when one knocked at my door and I heard a boy calling. My man asked who called and what he would have, and he answered that Theagenes the Thessalian was there. I was glad of these tidings and bade him to be called in, thinking that this beginning did offer itself that I might learn how to bring to pass that which I was about. For I guessed that he came to crave my help to obtain his love, because he heard at the banquet that I was an Egyptian and a priest, and thought, as many wrongly do, that the wisdom of the Egyptians is always one and the same thing. But of our wisdom there is one kind that is common and—as I may term it—creeps on the ground, which is concerned with ghosts and occupied about dead bodies, using herbs and addicted to enchantments, neither tending itself nor bringing such as use it to any good end. It often is deceived by its own practices and its success is of a vile and terrible sort ; that is to say it gives visions of such things as are not, as though they were, and beguileth men of such things as they looked for, a deviser of mischief and a minister of foul and unlawful pleasures. The other, my son, which is the true wisdom, from whence the counterfeit has degenerated, we priests and holy men do practise from our youth. It is conversant with heavenly things, liveth with the gods, and partakes of the higher nature, considering the moving of the stars and gaining a knowledge of the future therefrom, far removed from these earthly evils and directing all things to the honesty and commodity of men. It was at the guidance of this wisdom that

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

I left my country for a time, if by any means I could avoid the things that were foreshewn to me, as I told you before, and the battle between my sons. But let us leave these things to the gods, and especially to the ladies of destiny, in whose power it lies to do this or to refrain. For they decreed my banishment not more, it seems, for this reason than that I should find Chariclea. And how that happened you shall know by that which followeth.'

After Theagenes was come in and bade me good morning, and I had saluted him again, I set him down on my bed beside me and asked him : ' What earnest matter drove you hither to me thus early ? ' After he had stroked his face a little ' I am in great distress,' quoth he, ' and I am ashamed to tell you why.' I thought it then a fit time to glose with him, and to guess at that which I knew full well. Therefore, looking upon him cheerfully, I said : ' Although you be ashamed to tell me, yet nothing can be hidden from my wisdom and the knowledge of the gods.' And after I had lifted up myself a little, and made as though I would have cast some account with my fingers, and spread my hair about my ears like one that would have prophesied, I said : ' My son, thou art in love.' He started at my words, and when I added : ' with Chariclea,'—then supposing I knew it from God, he could scarce refrain from falling down and worshipping me. Which when I would not let him do, he came to me, and kissed my head oft, and gave God thanks that his hope had not failed him, and prayed me heartily that I would save him. For he could not live if he had not help, and that immediately : so great was the trouble that he felt and so vehemently did his heart burn ; the more because he never was

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

in love before. For he sware unto me many oaths that he never had to do with woman, and that he utterly refused marriage and love, if any were proffered him, until Chariclea's beauty had overcome him. Not because he was chaste of nature, or could not do like other men, but because till then he had never seen a woman worthy to be loved. And as he said this he wept, in token that by force and against his will he was subdued by the maid. I took him up, and comforted him, and said : ‘ Be of good cheer, now that you have once come to me for help ; she will not be stronger than my wisdom. It is true that she is somewhat austere and can hardly be made to love, utterly despising Venus and marriage, if she do but hear them named ; but for your sake we must try all means. Art can break nature. Only you must be bold, and do whatsoever thing necessary I command you.’ He promised to do all that I should tell him, even if I bade him walk upon the blades of swords.

While he was thus praying and beseeching me, promising to give me all that he ever had for my pains, one came from Charicles and said : ‘ Sir, Charicles desireth you to come to him. He is in Apollo’s temple hereby, and prayeth to the god ; for he has been troubled, I know not how, by certain dreams.’ Thereupon I rose ; and when I had sent Theagenes away and was come to the temple, I found Charicles sitting in a stall, very sad and sorrowful. I came to him and said : ‘ Why be you so sad ? ’ He answered : ‘ Why should I not ? Diverse visions in my sleep have troubled me, and my daughter, as I hear, is very sick and slept never a wink this night. For my part, although for many reasons her sickness grieves me, yet the greatest is that to-morrow is a day ordained for sport, and the custom is for the temple priestess

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

to hold forth the torch to those who run in armour and be the judge of their race. Of two things then one must happen ; either her absence will break this long accustomed order, or else by coming against her will she shall be more sick. Wherefore, even if before you could not, yet help her now, and do us this good turn, which shall well beseem our friendship and be besides an act of piety toward God. I know that it is easy for you, if you will, even to heal one who is, as you say, bewitched. For holy priests can bring wonderful things to pass.' I said, beguiling him also, that I had been careless hitherto, and asked for one day's liberty to make some medicine for her. 'At this present,' I went on, 'let us go to the maid, and consider her more diligently, and comfort her as much as we may. And I would also, Charicles, that you should have some talk with the maid concerning me, and by your commendation bring me into better credit with her, that she being more familiar with me may the boldier suffer me to heal her.' 'Content,' said he ; let us be going.'

After we came to Chariclea, to what end should one make many words ! She was altogether vanquished by her affliction : the roses had gone from her cheeks, and the brightness of her eyes was quenched with tears, as if it had been with water. Yet when she saw us she composed herself, and tried to regain her wonted looks and speech. Charicles embraced and kissed her a thousand times, and omitting no kind of endearment—' My child, my sweet daughter' quoth he, ' wilt thou not tell thy father what thy sickness is ? Seeing that thou hast been bewitched, why dost thou hold thy peace, as though thou wert the wrong-doer and wert not thyself injured by those eyes which so unluckily looked upon thee ? But be

FESTIVAL AT DELPHI

of good heart. I have begged this wise man Calasiris to find some remedy for thee ; which thing he can well perform, for he is as excellent as any man in heavenly knowledge, as one who is by profession a priest, and best of all he is our good friend. Wherefore you will do very well if you suffer him without any impediment to use for your cure either any enchantment or whatever else he will : in any case the company of such wise men is pleasant to you.' Chariclea said nothing, but moved her head as though she consented to the counsel he gave her. When these things were thus ordered we went away, Charicles reminding me that I should have regard to my promise and bethink me how I might make her have a fancy for marriage and a desire of men. I made him then very glad when I told him that within a short time I would satisfy his mind.

THE FOURTH BOOK

THE STRANGE BIRTH

The next day Apollo's games were to end but the sport between the young lovers was at its full, Cupid in my opinion being moderator, and arbiter thereof, in full determination to show his games the greatest of all by these two champions whom he had set together. Such was the sight : all Greece looked on and the Amphictyons sat as judges. After all the other contests were sumptuously finished, such as running, wrestling and boxing, at last the herald by proclamation called on those that should run in armour. And therewithal Chariclea as priestess glistened at the race end. For she had come, although against her will, partly for the custom's sake but more in my judgment upon hope to see Theagenes somewhere. In her left hand she held a burning torch, and in the other hand a branch of palm, and as soon as she appeared every man looked upon her. But even so perchance no one saw her before Theagenes ; for a lover is very ready to espy that with love whereof he is held. And besides, after he knew what should be done, he thought upon nothing but to see her. Wherefore he could not keep his own counsel but said quietly to me—for he sat next to me of purpose—‘That is Chariclea.’ But I bade him be quiet.

After the proclamation was ended there came forth one marvellously well armed, a haughty man and surpassing all the others, as he thought, in honour, who in

THE STRANGE BIRTH

many courses before had won the garland : Marry then there was none to contend with him, for none I think would be so bold. The Amphictyons then were for letting him run alone, since by the law he may not have the crown that hath not ventured for the same. But he made request that challenge might be made against all men. The judges gave command that it should be so and the herald called for some man to run against him. Theagenes said ' This man doth challenge me.' ' What mean you by that ? ' quoth I. ' It shall be so, father ' quoth he ; ' for none but I, if I look on and be in presence, shall receive reward of victory at Chariclea's hand.' ' Do you neither care for nor esteem the shame that ensueth if you be overcome ? ' said I. ' What man,' said he, ' will look on Chariclea and approach to her so hastily that he can get before me ? To whom can her eyes give like wings as to me, and cause him to fly so fast ? Know you not that painters make love with wings, declaring as by a riddle the nimbleness of those that be in love. And if besides what I have said already I must needs boast, no man hitherto has ever vaunted that he could outrun me.'

When he had said this he leapt forth and went down, declared his name and country and drew lots for his place in the race. Then he put on his armour and stood at the starting point, panting because of the great desire he had to run, and scarcely able to tarry for the sound of the trumpet. It was a goodly sight and worthy to be looked at, much like that wherein Homer bringeth in Achilles as he ran at Scamander. All Greece was moved at this deed, which fell contrary to their expectation, and wished the victory to Theagenes as heartily as if every man had run himself. For comeliness of person is of great force to get the good will of men.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Chariclea also was moved beyond measure, and since I looked upon her a great while, I espied how her countenance diversely changed. For after the herald had in all men's hearing named those that were to run, Ormenus, an Arcadian and Theagenes, a Thessalian, they left their standings and began the race, going with such speed that men could scarce behold them. Then the maid could not keep quiet any more, but her limbs were moved and her feet leapt into the air, as though her mind was with Theagenes helping him in the race. All those that looked on waited to see what the end would be and were very anxious ; most of all I, who had now determined with myself to have like care for him as if he had been my son.' 'No marvel,' said Cnemon, 'if those that were there and saw him were anxious ; I myself now am afraid for Theagenes, and therefore, if he got the prize, I pray you quick and tell me.'

'After they had run the middle of the race,' said Calasiris, 'Theagenes turned a little about and frowning upon Ormenus lifted up his shield aloft, and stretching out his neck with his eyes fast fixed on Chariclea, he flew toward her like an arrow to its mark, so that the Arcadian was left many yards behind ; which quantity of ground was after measured. Then running to Chariclea he of purpose fell into her lap, as though he could not stay himself, and when he took the garland from her I saw well enough that he kissed her hand.' 'O happy turn,' cried Cnemon ; 'he got the victory and kissed her also. But what happened then ?' 'Not only canst thou not be satisfied with hearing ' quoth Calasirus, 'but thou art not easily overcome by sleep. A great part of the night is past and yet thou keepest watch and art not weary of so long a tale' 'I think Homer was wrong,' said Cnemon, 'when he said of all

THE STRANGE BIRTH

things there is satiety, even of love. In my opinion a man can never be weary thereof, either if he be in love himself, or hear the tale of other lovers. And if a man is telling of the love of Theagenes and Chariclea, who is so stony or hard hearted that he would not conceive delight therein, even if he listened for a year? Wherefore, go forward with your tale.'

'Theagenes then,' quoth Calasirus, 'was crowned, and proclaimed victor, and brought back with all men's joyful gratulations. And now Chariclea was quite vanquished, and more enslaved by love even than before, since she had seen Theagenes this second time. For the mutual sight of lovers is a reminder of love, and doth as much inflame the mind as fire when it is put to any dry matter. After she came home, she passed a like night to the others, or even a worse. I also slept but little, considering whither we should go in our secret flight and into what country God would have the young couple carried. I conjectured indeed that we must take our voyage by sea, since the oracle had said—

*'And sailing surging streams
Shall come at length to country scorched
with burning Phoebus' beams.'*

But whither they should be conveyed I could find one only way to know, if I could by any means get the wrapping which was laid out with Chariclea, wherein Charicles said that he was told that all the maid's history was signified. For I thought it was likely that from it I should learn the maid's parents and country—which already I began to suspect—and perhaps also find whither the ladies of destiny would send them.

The next morning I came very early to Chariclea, and found all her housefolk weeping, and Charicles as much as any. 'What ado is here?' said I. 'My

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

daughter's sickness,' answered he, ' waxeth worse and worse ; she hath had a worse night of this than any yet.' 'Get you hence,' quoth I, 'and all the rest avoid. Let some one set me a three-footed stool here, and a little laurel with fire, and frankincense. And let none come in to trouble me before I call.' Charicles gave his orders and I having now gotten good occasion, began to play my pageant as if I had been upon a stage. I burned frankincense, and mumbled with my lips, and laid laurel on her from top to toe, and at length, after I had drowsily or old wife like gaped and played the fool a great while with myself and the maid, I made an end. She, while I was thus doing, wagged her head oft, and smiled, and told me that I was deceived and knew not her grief. Therewith I sat nearer to her and said : ' My daughter, be of good cheer. Thy grief is common and easily healed. Without doubt thou wert bewitched when you were at the pomp, or rather when you presided at the race which was run in armour. And he that hath thus bewitched you, I think, is Theagenes ; for I perceived well that he often beheld you and cast many wanton looks at you.' ' Whether he did so or not,' said she, ' well fare he. But what countryman is he, and of what line is he descended ? For I saw many wonder much at him.' ' You have heard already,' said I, ' that he is a Thessalian, by the herald who proclaimed his name, and he fetcheth his pedigree from Achilles, and in my judgment he may do so with good reason, considering his tall stature and comely personage, which manifestly confirm Achilles' blood. Saving that he is not so arrogant and proud as that hero was, but doth moderate and assuage the haughtiness and fierceness of his mind with commendable courtesy. Which thing being so, although he have

THE STRANGE BIRTH

an envious eye and with his looks hath bewitched you, yet he himself hath more pain than he hath caused you to have.' 'O Father,' quoth she, 'I thank you that you be sorrowful for our mishap ; but why do you speak evil without cause of him who hath done us no harm ? For I am not bewitched, but have, as I guess, some other infirmity.' 'Then daughter,' said I, 'why do you conceal it and not frankly utter it, that we may with more ease find remedy thereto ? Am I not in age, yea rather in good will, your father ? Is not your father familiarly acquainted with me ? Are we not of one profession ? Tell me your disease and I will keep your counsel ; yes, if you will, I will be bound by oath to you so to do. Speak boldly, and suffer not your infirmity to increase with silence. For sickness which is soon known can easily be cured ; but that which by long time hath gotten strength is almost incurable. Silence doth much succour any disease ; that which is uttered may by comfort easily be remedied.' Thereat she waited a little, declaring by her countenance many changes of her mind, and said : 'Let me alone to-day and you shall know it hereafter ; if indeed you know it not before, since you profess yourself a soothsayer.' Therewith I rose and departed, giving her occasion to moderate the bashfulness of her mind. Then Charicles met me and, 'Have you any good news to tell me ?' quoth he. 'All shall be well,' said I, 'for to-morrow she shall be healed of her infirmity. And there shall be somewhat else happen also of a right pleasurable sort. In the meantime nothing hinders to call in a physician.' When I had said thus, I made haste to be gone, that he might ask me no more questions.

After I had gone a little way from the house, I espied Theagenes walking about the temple and the

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

precinct, and talking to himself, as though it were sufficient for him even to see the place where Chariclea dwelt. I turned a little aside and was for passing by, as though I had not seen him. But he cried out : ‘ God speed you, Calasiris : tarry, I pray you : for I waited for you.’ I turned suddenly about, and said : ‘ Why, it is the beautiful Theagenes : I did not see you.’ ‘ How am I beautiful,’ quoth he, ‘ who do not please Chariclea ? ’ I set a face on it as though I were angry and said : ‘ Will you not cease to speak evil of me and my skill, whereby she is now entrapped and compelled to love you, and doth desire to see you, as one that is mightier than herself.’ ‘ What say you, father ? ’ said he. ‘ Doth Chariclea desire to see me ? Why do you not then carry me to her ? ’ And therewith he started to run. But I caught him by the cloak and said : ‘ Stand still here, although you be very light footed. This is not a thing that can be snatched as booty nor is it easy for every man that list to get the same. It must be done with great counsel and performed with no small provision. Know you not that the maid’s father is the noblest man in Delphi ? Do you not remember that the laws appoint death as penalty for such deeds as these ? ’ ‘ It matters not if I died,’ quoth he, ‘ after I had my will of Chariclea. But if you think it good, let us go to her father and desire her of him to be wife ; for I am worthy enough to be Charicles’ kinsman.’ ‘ We shall not prevail with him,’ said I. ‘ Not that he can find any fault in you, but he hath long ago promised her in marriage to his sister’s son.’ ‘ He shall repent it,’ said he, ‘ whoever he be. While I live, no other man shall wed Chariclea. This hand of mine is not yet so benumbed, nor my sword so blunt.’ ‘ Be content,’ said I : ‘ we shall have no need of any of

THE STRANGE BIRTH

these things. Be only ruled by me, and do as I command you. For the moment depart, and take heed that you be not espied talking with me often ; when you come, come privily and alone.' At that he went away very sad.

The next day Charicles met me, and as soon as he saw me, he ran to me and kissed my cheeks often times, continually crying : ' Of such force is your wisdom and friendship. You have brought a great business to pass. She is taken now that was hard to be won ; she that was before invincible is now subdued. Chariclea is in love.' I began to wag my head at this, and knit my brows, and walk proudly, and said there was no doubt that she would not be able to abide my first assault, seeing that as yet I had used nothing great upon her. ' But tell me, Charicles,' quoth I, ' how you perceived that she was in love ? ' ' When I had gotten very trusty physicians,' replied he, ' as you gave me counsel, I brought them to her, promising them all the riches I had if they could cure her. As soon as they came in to her, they asked what her disease was, and where the pain held her. She turned her face from them and answered them not a word, but repeated with a loud voice this verse of Homer—

" Achilles is the bravest man of all the Greekish rout." Acestinus, a wise man—perhaps you know him—took her wrist in his hand, although against her will, and seemed to judge her disease by the beating of her pulse, which declareth, I suppose, the state of the heart. After he had felt her pulse a good while, and had looked her carefully up and down, he said : " Charicles, you have brought us here in vain ; physic can do her no good." " O God," cried I : " why say you so, must my daughter die without all hope of recovery ? " " Make not such ado," said he, " but

listen to me.' And then, when we were in a corner, so that neither the maid nor any other could hear us, he said : " Our art doth profess the caring of dis-tempered bodies, and not principally of the diseased mind, but only when it is afflicted with the body, so that when that is healed, then is it also cured. The maid in truth is sick but not in body ; for no humour abounding, the head ache vexeth her not, no ague burneth her, nor is any part or parcel of her body grieved. You may account this, and nothing else, to be true." I earnestly begged him, if he had noticed anything further in her, to tell me. " Doth not even a child know," quoth he, " that love is an affection of the heart and a sort of sickness ? There is naught that ails her inward body, but do you not see that her eyes are swollen, her looks distraught, and that she is pale in her face ? Besides, she raveth and uttereth whatsoever cometh into her mind, and lieth awake without a cause, and hath suddenly lost the just amplitude of her limbs. You must find her the man for whom she yearneth ; he is the only one, Charicles, who can cure her." When he had said this, he departed. So I have come in haste to you, my saviour and my god, whom both I and she acknowledge to be alone able to help us. For when I desired and often besought her to tell me what she ailed, she made me this answer, that she knew not what disease she had and that none but Calasiris, she was persuaded, could cure her ; and therefore she begged me to call you to her. Whence I guessed that your wisdom it was that had brought her under.' ' Can you,' said I to Charicles, ' tell whom she loveth, as well as that she is in love ? ' ' No, by Apollo,' said he ; ' for how or by what means should I know that.' ' Marry, I would above all things that she loved Alcamenes my sister's son, whom,

THE STRANGE BIRTH

as much as lieth in me, I have appointed to be her husband.' ' You might try,' said I, ' and bring him in, and show him to her.' He liked my counsel well, and went his way.

Later about midday, meeting me again he said : ' You shall hear a sad and pitiful thing. My daughter seemeth to be out of her wits, such a strange infirmity hath she. I brought in Alcamenes, as you bade me, and showed him to her very freshly apparelled. But she, as though she had seen the Gorgon's head or something yet more terrible, cried out with a loud voice, and turned her face to the other part of the chamber, and put her hand to her throat instead of a halter, and threatened that she would kill herself, and bound it with an oath too, if we dispatched not ourselves out of the chamber quickly. We went from her in less time than she spake the words : for what could we do, seeing so fearful a sight ? Now I come to beseech you again, that you will neither suffer her to perish nor me to be frustrated of my desire.' ' O Charicles,' said I, you said truly that your daughter was distraught. She is indeed distracted by those powers of no mean strength that I have sent upon her, which, as it seemeth, force her to do that which both by nature and determination of mind she abhorred. Some god, methinketh, has taken upon himself to hinder this business and to strive against my ministers. Wherefore it is time you showed me the wrapping which you said was found with her together with the other tokens. I fear that it be enchanted and wrought with such signs as do now vex her mind, by reason that some enemy did lay this snare for her at the beginning, that she should be estranged from all love and die without issue.' He agreed to what I said, and within a while brought

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

me the wrapping. I asked him to give me a space, and when he agreed I took it to my lodging, and delaying not a whit began to read what was written thereon. It was in Ethiopian letters, not the common sort, but such as their princes use, like to those that the Egyptians call hieratic, and this was what I read therein—

“ Persina, Queen of the Ethiopians, to her daughter by travail, by whatsoever name she shall be called, writes in haste the lamentation contained herein, as her last gift.”—I was amazed, Cnemon, when I heard Persina’s name. But I read that which followed, which was this—“ My daughter, the Sun, who is author of our race, is witness that it was not because of any misdeed that I have cast thee forth and concealed thee from thy father Hydaspes’ sight. Yet, my daughter, I would have myself excused to thee, if thou dost happen to live, and to him who shall find thee, if God do so provide, and to all men ; and therefore now I declare the cause of thy exposure. Our ancestors are, among the gods, the Sun and Bacchus : among heroes, Perseus, Andromeda and Memnon. Those who built our royal palace at various seasons adorned the walls with paintings of their various exploits, and with their limned figures decked the guest chambers and the porticoes therein, while the king’s bridal chamber is garnished with pictures containing the loves of Perseus and Andromeda. In that chamber, after Hydaspes had been married to me ten years and we had never a child, we happened to be resting one summer day, for that we were drowsy with the fierce heat. And it was then that your father had to do with me, swearing that by a dream he was commanded so to do ; and I by and by perceived myself to be with child. All the time after until I was

THE STRANGE BIRTH

delivered was kept as a public festival and sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered to the gods, for that the king hoped now to have one to succeed him in his kingdom. But thou wert born white, which colour is strange among the Ethiopians. I knew the reason, that it was because, while my husband had to do with me, I was looking at the picture of Andromeda brought down by Perseus naked from the rock, and so by mishap engendered presently a thing like to her. But counting it certain that thy colour would procure me to be accused of adultery, and that none would believe me when I told them the cause, I determined to rid myself of shameful death and to commit thee to the unstableness of fortune, which was a thing far to be preferred to present death or to be called a bastard. Telling my husband therefore that thou wert straightway dead, I have privily laid thee forth with the greatest riches that I had, as a reward for him who shall find thee and take thee up. And besides those other things I have wrapped thee in this band, wherein is contained the story of both our fortunes, which I have written with tears and blood that I have shed for thee, since I have thee and fell into much sorrow for thee at one and the same time. But oh my sweet child, that wert but for a small while my daughter, if thou live, remember thy noble parentage, and love chastity, which is the sure sign of womanly virtue and queenly mind, and follow thy parents by keeping the same. Above all things remember that thou seek for a certain ring among the jewels that are about thee, which thy father gave me when we were first betrothed, in the hoop whereof is the kings secret token and the stone is a Pantarbe consecrated with secret virtues. These things I have said to thee, making this writing my messenger, since

God has taken from me the power to tell thee them to thy face. It may perchance be useless and void of effect, but also it may be profitable hereafter: for no man knoweth what uncertain fortune will bring. To be short, what I have written, O my daughter, beautiful in vain, who by thy beauty hath brought me blame, if thou live, shall be a token to thee of thy birth. But if thou die—which God grant I never hear—it shall serve as thy mother's lamentation at thy grave."

After I had read this, Cnemon I knew who she was, and marvelled greatly at the governance of the gods, and was full of pleasure and sorrow, and altogether strangely affected, weeping and laughing at once. My mind was glad for the knowing of that whereof I was ignorant before, and for the discovery of the oracle's meaning, but it was very much troubled for that which was to come and had great pity and compassion for the life of man, as a thing very unstable and weak and bending every way; which thing I then knew especially by Chariclea's fortune. I thought of many things, of what parents she was come, whose child she was thought to be, how far she was from her country, and was now called daughter by a false name having lost her natural country soil and royal blood of Ethiopia. To make few words, I was a great while in study, since I had good cause to pity and bewail her past state, and yet durst not commend that which was to come. But at last, bringing back my thoughts to sober facts, I concluded that it was not good now to delay the matter but rather with speed to execute that which I had begun.

I went then to Chariclea and found her alone, altogether wearied with love and still striving to withstand her fancy. Marry, her body was much

afflicted, by reason that it yielded to her infirmity and she was not able with any force to withstand the violence thereof. After I had sent them away who were with her and given them charge that they should make no noise, under pretence that I had some prayers and invocations to make about the maid, I said to her : ' Now is the time come, Chariclea—for so you promised me yesterday—to tell me your grief, and not to conceal it any longer from a man that loveth you heartily and can know it, even if you hold your tongue.' She took me by the hand and kissed it, and therewithal she wept, and said : ' Wise Calasiris, since you seem to know my disease, grant me one favour. Suffer me to hold my peace and be unhappy, gaining this much at least, that I hide my shame and conceal that which to suffer is evil but to utter is worse. Although my increasing disease doth much grieve me, yet this grieveth me more, that at the first I overcame it not but yielded to love, a thing which even to speak of doth defile the honorable name of virginity.' With that I comforted her and said : ' My daughter, you do well for two reasons to conceal your state. I have no need to be told that which by skill I knew already. And not without cause do you blush to utter that which it becometh women to keep secret. But because thou hast once tasted of love and Theagenes hath subdued thee—for thus am I by divine inspiration informed—know that neither art thou alone nor yet the first that hath been thus affected. Many other noble women and many maidens in all things very chaste have tasted hereof as well as you. For Love is the greatest of the gods, and is said even sometimes to overcome the gods themselves. Now you must consider how you may best order your business. Not to be in love at all is a kind of happiness ; but

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

when you are taken, to use it moderately is a point of excellent wisdom. Which thing you may well do, if you will believe me, by putting away the filthy name of lust, and embracing the lawful bond of wedlock, and turning your disease into matrimony.'

When I had said this, Cnemon, she was in a great sweat, and it was plain that she was glad of what she heard, and greatly in fear and much troubled for what she hoped ; and moreover she waxed red to think in what manner she was taken. After she had waited a good while : ' Father,' said she, ' you speak of marriage and bid me embrace it, as though it were plain that either my father would be content therewith or mine enemy want it.' ' As for the young man,' said I, ' there is no doubt. He is more in love than you, being moved by the same reasons, since both your minds, as it seems, at the first sight knew one another's excellency and fell into a like affection, while I myself have made his love the greater to do you pleasure. But he who is supposed to be your father provides you with another husband, Alcamenes, whom you know well enough.' ' Let him,' quoth she, ' rather seek to lay him in his grave than marry him to me. Either Theagenes shall have me, or that which is destined for all shall receive me. But I pray you, tell me how you know that Charicles is not my father in truth, but only supposed so to be.' ' By this,' said I ; and therewithal I showed her the wrapping. ' Where had you that, or how came you by it ? ' said she. ' After he had received me in Egypt from him who brought me up, he carried me hither I know not how, and took that from me, and kept it in a chest, that it might not by continuance of time be spoiled.' ' How I came by it,' said I, ' you shall hear afterward. But tell me now, if you can, what is contained therein.'

THE STRANGE BIRTH

When she told me that she could not, 'It declarereth,' said I, 'your parents, your country, and all your fortune.' Then she begged me that I would tell her what I knew, and I told her all, reading it word by word and interpreting it to her.

After she knew her birth and had taken stomach unto her, she drew more near her true pedigree and said : 'What must we do ?' I told her plainly all my plan and made her privy to every point. 'I, my daughter,' said I, 'went once into Ethiopia to learn of their wisdom, and was well acquainted with your mother Persina ; for the king's court is a place where all wise men resort. Marry, I had a little praise the more, because I joined the wisdom of Egypt and of Ethiopia together, which made me of the more credit. When she understood that I was returning to my country, she told me all your affairs, binding me first by oath to keep it secret, and said moreover that she durst not tell the wise men of that country. She desired me to ask the gods, first, whether after your exposure you lived ; then, in what country you were. For she could hear of none such as you in Ethiopia, although she had made diligent inquiry. I learned all of the gods, both that you were alive and where you were living. Then she besought me that I would seek you out and urge you to return to your country. For she said, she lived without issue and children by reason of her great grief for you and she was now ready to confess all to your father, if you at any time came to light, and she knew that he would be persuaded, both because of the long experience he had of her and also of the great desire and joy he would have in one to succeed him contrary to his expectation. This she said and begged me to do, by the oath that I had sworn by the sun, which may not be violated by any of the

wise man. To perform that oath I came hither, although I took not this voyage for that cause only, accounting it by the will of the gods an advantage gotten in my long journey. I have been busy about this for long and have left no convenient service to you undone. But I told you not of the matter since I was waiting for a just opportunity, and also by some means to get the wrappings that I might have due proof of my tale. Therefore, if you consent, you may go away now with us, before you suffer anything you would not from the violence of Charicles, who is providing very busily to match you with Alcmenes. Then you will recover your kindred, your country, and your parents, and dwell with Theagenes, who is ready to follow us into whatsoever country we will, and will leave a foreign bastard life for one that is natural and princely, ruling as queen together with your dear lover, if we may believe, the gods and especially the oracle of Apollo. With that I brought the oracle into her remembrance and declared to her what it meant, she already knowing thereof before, inasmuch as it was on every man's mouth and hotly debated. At this she was moved and— Father, quoth she, 'since you say the gods will it so and I believe no less, what must we do?' You must make, said I, 'as though you were content to marry Alcmenes.' That is a hard thing, she replied, 'and scarcely seemly, even in word to prefer any man before Theagenes. But inasmuch as I have put myself, father, into the hands of the gods and you tell me now the purpose of this design, and how it may be undone before it be brought to effect.' The issue will teach you, said I. 'Many things, told beforehand to women, have greatly hindered the matter in hand: which, being suddenly put into practice, are for the most part by

THE STRANGE BIRTH

them more boldly achieved. Only follow my counsel both now and at other times, and be content to allow the marriage that Charicles provides for you, remembering that he will do nothing without my counsel and guidance.' She made promise so to do; and I went my way, and left her weeping.

Scarcely was I gone out of her chamber when I saw Charicles, very sad and full of sorrow. 'Good sir,' said I, 'you should rejoice, and be glad, and do sacrifice of thanksgiving to the gods. You have gotten that which you have long desired. Chariclea by my much skill and manifold wisdom has been made content to take a husband. But you are sad and heavy, and can scarce refrain from tears, I know not why.' 'Why should I not be sad?' said he. 'My dearest daughter will be carried off into another country before she is wedded, as you said, if we may give credit both to other dreams and especially to that which I had this night. Methought that an eagle, let fly out of Apollo's hand, came down, took my daughter out of my arms, and carried her into I know not what far country, which was black and full of ugly shadows. What he did with her I could not tell, since his flight and the infinite distance of space between us took away the sight of mine eyes.'

As soon as he said this I knew whereto his dream tended. But that I might withdraw him from this despair of mind and bring him far from suspicion of what should come to pass, I said: 'Sir priest, although you are the servant of the most prophetic of the gods, you seem to me to judge not aright respecting this vision. It foreshoweth to you the marriage of your daughter, and doth secretly signify by the eagle that a husband shall take her, and that Apollo will bring him to her with his own hand. And yet you seem to

be angry and construe your dream worse than it is meant. Wherefore, Charicles, let us be content and help the purpose of the gods by labouring in every way to persuade the maid.' He asked me what was best to be done, that the maid might be more obedient. 'If,' quoth I, 'you have any precious thing in store, or apparel wrought with gold, or jewels of price, bring them to her, as tokens from her spouse, and appease her with gifts; for gold and precious stones are for women like a magic charm. You must provide everything ready for the solemnity and perform the marriage at once, while her desire therefor, which is wrought by art against her will, remains stable and unchanged.' 'Think that I will omit nothing that I can do,' said Charicles; and with that he went home rejoicing and made haste to put words into action. He did indeed, as I perceived afterward, all that I commanded, bringing to her costly garments and also the jewels of Ethiopia which Persina set forth with Chariclea that she might know who she was, pretending forsooth that they were bridal gifts from Alcamenes.

I for my part went to find Theagenes and asked him where his friends were who had made the pomp with him. 'The maids,' quoth he, 'are gone away already that they may take the easier journey: the young men also will tarry no longer, but make much ado and prepare to return to their country.' When I heard this I told him what he should say to them and do himself, and gave him charge to wait until I showed him the time and the occasion. And so I left him and went to the temple of Apollo, to pray the god that he would instruct me concerning my flight with the young couple. But the god was quicker than any man would think, who helpeth those that act according to his will, even though he be not called upon, and

THE STRANGE BIRTH

preventeth their prayers with the readiness of his good will : as even then it happened that he prevented my question with the answer and did in deed declare his help and guidance. For as I went to seek the prophetess, anxious for the performance of that which I had determined, a voice stopped me as I went by, which said : ‘ Come, good friend, quick and join us : we who are strangers here invite thee.’ And indeed there was a company there making a sacrificial banquet with music in honour of Hercules. I stopped when I heard the words ; for I might not go past when God had called me. I took some frankincense therefore and offered it, and made a libation of water, and although they seemed to wonder at the simplicity of my sacrifice, yet they desired me to take part in their banquet. I did so, and after I had sat down on a bench which they strewed with myrtle and laurel for strangers, and had eaten as I am accustomed to do, I said unto them : ‘ Good fellows, I thank you for this good cheer. But I am utterly ignorant of your estate : wherefore it is time that ye tell me who you are and whence you come. For it is an unseemly and very rude thing that those who have done sacrifice and banqueted together and made holy meat the beginning of friendship should, depart without either knowing the other’s affairs.’ They told me then that they were merchants of Tyre in Phoenicia, and that they were sailing to Carthage in Africa, their ship freighted with merchandise from India, Ethiopia, and Phoenicia. At that moment they were making a feast to the Tyrian Hercules for a victory just gotten, inasmuch as this young man, said they, pointing to one who sat beside me, has gained the prize for wrestling and proved that a Tyrian may win the victory in the midst of Greeks.

'For he,' said they, 'after we had sailed past Malea, and by force of tempest were constrained to land at the island of Cephalenia, swore unto us by our country's god that in his sleep it was told him that he should obtain the victory in these games of Apollo. And when he had persuaded us to turn from our intended course and land here, he made proof by his deeds that his prophecy was true, so that now he is proclaimed as a famous victor, who was but late a merchant, and is offering this sacrifice to the god who was his conductor, both as a thanksgiving for his victory and as a prayer for a prosperous voyage. And to-morrow, if the wind serve, we shall leave this coast.' 'Have you in truth determined this?' said I. 'Yea, verily,' answered they. 'You shall then, if you please,' I said, 'have my company. For I have a voyage to make to Sicily for a certain reason, and you sailing to Africa must pass by it.' 'You shall be welcome,' quoth they, 'if you will come; for we think we shall want for nothing good if we have with us a wise man, and a Grecian, and one who by experience is proved to be wellbeloved of the gods.' 'I would,' said I, 'that you will grant me one day, to make my provision.' 'You shall have to-morrow,' they said, 'on condition that by evening we be on the sea; for we commonly sail by night, since the winds that blow then from the land do calmly fill our sails.' I made bargain that I would do so, binding them first by oath that they should not depart before the promised time was expired.

So I left them there piping and dancing after the manner of the Assyrians, sometimes leaping aloft, sometimes bending their body downward, and writhing themselves as if they were inspired by some god. Next I went to Chariclea, and found her holding in

THE STRANGE BIRTH

her lap the jewels that Charicles gave her and gazing upon them. And then I went to Theagenes ; and when I had told them both what they should do I returned to my lodging and waited for what should be next. On the morrow this was what happened. About midnight, when all the city was fast asleep, a crew of armed young men came to the house of Chariclea. The captain of this amorous war was Theagenes, who after their brave pomp had thus taught his youth to play the soldiers. Those who heard them were frightened by the great clamour they made, and by the clashing of their shields, as with blazing torches they burst into the house. They lifted the door away easily—for it had been provided before that it should not be very hard barred—and carried Chariclea out, finding her already well prepared, since she knew hereof before, and ready with good will to suffer this assault ; taking away also a great deal of stuff, such as the maid commanded. After they had left her lodging, they sounded a war-like cry and made a terrible noise with their harness, and so passed through the city, casting the inhabitants thereof into a wonderful panic : and indeed they had chosen the dead of night for this very reason, that they might be the more afraid. Parnassus re-echoed the din of their clashing bronze ; and so they passed through Delphi, shouting loudly one to another the name of Chariclea.

When they had got out of the city, they hied them on horseback, as fast as they could, into the mountains of Oeta in Locris. But Theagenes and Chariclea, as had been arranged before, left their company, and came back to me privily, and fell trembling at my feet, and clasped my knees, and still cried : ‘ Save us, father.’ Chariclea said no more,

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

but held down her head, as though she were ashamed of what she had done. But Theagenes said : ‘ Save us, Calasiris ; for we are strangers and homeless supplicants, who have lost everything that we might win ourselves save our bodies, committed now to fortune and bond servants to a chaste love. Save us who by our own glad consent are banished and set our one hope of safety in you.’ I was moved hereat, and after I had wept over the young couple—rather with my heart than with mine eyes, so that they perceived it not and yet it eascd my grief—I comforted and emboldened them, bidding them hope for a happy end, since the matter was begun by the will and counsel of the gods. ‘ As for me,’ quoth I, ‘ I will go and dispatch the rest of our business. Tarry you for me in this place, and take diligent heed that no man espy you.’ When I had said this I was going away, but Chariclea caught me by the coat, and held me fast, and said : ‘ Nay, father, this is an unfair, or rather a traitorous beginning, if you go away and leave me alone with Theagenes, not considering how unmeet a lover is to play the guardian, if it be in his power to enjoy that which he loveth, and there be no man there to make him ashamed thereof. He burns the more fiercely, methinks, when he sees what he desires without any defence before him. Wherefore I will not let you depart before I am assured, both for the present and the future, by an oath of Theagenes that he will not fleshly have to do with me until I have recovered my country and parents ; or if the gods grant me not that, at least until by mine own free will I consent that he shall marry me. Otherwise never.’ I admired her words, and determined it should be so, and lit a fire upon the altar, and burned frankincense. Theagenes said that he was being

THE STRANGE BIRTH

wrongly used, since the faith which he had determined in his mind to keep was taken away by reason of his oath, and that he could not now show that he was acting willingly inasmuch as he would seem to be compelled by a stronger power. Still he took an oath by Apollo of Delphi, and Diana, and Venus herself, and all the gods of love that he would in all things do as Chariclea wished and enjoined.

This, and many other things, they concluded between themselves, calling the gods as witnesses thereto. I went as fast as I could to Charicles and found all his house in a hurly-burly and turmoil. His servants had come and told him of the taking away of the maid, and the citizens stood round about him in heaps, while he himself lamented sore. In a word, for ignorance of what had been done and want of counsel as to what they should do now, they were at their wits' end. Then began I with my big voice to thunder and say : ' Ye unhappy people, how long will you sit still, dumb like stocks, as though your wits also were taken away by your ill fortune ? Why do you not in armour pursue your enemies ? Will you not take and punish those who have done you this wrong ? ' ' It is in vain perchance,' said Charicles, ' to strive against this present fortune. I understand well that I am thus punished because of the anger of the gods, which was foreshowed me, since I went in an unlucky time into the privy chapel and saw there that which was not lawful to be seen. As a punishment therefor I was told that I should lose that which I set most store by. But there is no impediment, as the proverb has it, even against a god to fight, if only we knew whom to pursue or who hath done us this mischief.' ' That is Theagenes the Thessalian,' said I, ' whom you praised so much and made my friend,

and the young men who were with him. You may perhaps find some one of them still in the city, who hath waited here till this evening. Wherefore arise and call the people to council.' So was it done : the captains appointed a meeting, proclaiming the same by trumpet in the city ; the people straightway came together ; the theatre was made a court by night. Charicles came forward and by his very aspect roused the multitude at once to lamentation ; for he was clad in black raiment, and had poured dust and ashes over his head and face. ' Men of Delphi,' said he, ' perhaps you suppose, considering the greatness of my miseries, that I have come hither and gathered this multitude of people to utter mine own mishaps unto you. But it is not so. I suffer indeed such things as may be compared with death itself, and at this present time my house is desolate and destroyed by the gods, solitary and robbed of what I held most dear. Yet the common frustration and vain hope of all doth comfort me a little and giveth me some courage suggesting that I may yet recover my daughter again. And our city moveth me even more, which I desire and look shall be victorious first and take revenge on those that have wronged her. Unless indeed these Thessalian youths have robbed us also of our lofty courage and the just indignation we should feel for our country and our country's gods. For it is altogether intolerable that a few dancing boys, sent on a sacred message, should go away after they have wasted the most noble city of Greece and taken out of Apollo's temple the most precious jewel thereof, Chariclea, which also was my life. O implacable and too obstinate anger of God against us ! First, as you know, it killed my natural daughter on the day of her marriage, and then her mother also from sorrow at

THE STRANGE BIRTH

her death, and banished me from my native country. But all that was tolerable after I had found Chariclea. Chariclea was my life, my hope, and the stay of my stock. Chariclea was my only comfort, and, so to say, my anchor. And now this tempest and evil fortune —whatever it be that hath now come upon me—hath taken her from me. Neither hath it done this simply or by chance, but as it is wont to triumph over me with the utmost cruelty, it hath taken her almost from her marriage bed, inasmuch as the day of her wedding, was already spread abroad among you all.'

As he thus spake and so lamented, quite carried away by grief, the captain Hegesias bade him be content and get him away, saying: ' You men that be here, Charicles will have time enough to lament hereafter. But let us not be drowned by his sorrow, nor carried away, as with a great stream of water, by his tears, letting pass the due occasion, which, as in all things, so in war is of the greatest force. For if we leave this assembly now and pursue at once, there is some hope that we shall overtake our enemies, who now travel without care, knowing us to be unprovided. But if lamenting, or rather like women bewailing, by our tarrying we give them time to escape, we shall deserve nothing but to be scorned, and that even by these striplings themselves: who I say ought to be impaled as soon as they be taken and some of them ignominiously dealt with, so that their punishment redound also on their families. This may easily be done if we move the Thessalians to displeasure against these that have fled, and their posterity, by forbidding them to take any part hereafter in their holy embassy and in the hero's funeral sacrifice, and by decreeing that it shall be done at the cost of our common treasury.' When this had been approved of the people and by

their decree established : ‘Let this also,’ said the captain, ‘if it please you, be ratified by your voices, that the temple priestess no longer give the torch to those that run in armour. For as I think, therefrom grew the beginning of this impiety in Theagenes, who thought of this rape, it may be deemed, ever since he first saw her. It is well therefore to take away the occasion of such like attempts hereafter.’ After this was ratified by the votes and hands of all that were present, Hegesias gave the signal to go forth and proclaimed war by sound of trumpet, so that all the theatre was dissolved into battle, and every man ran from the council to arms, not only the strong men and such as were able to wear armour, but boys even and some that were scarce striplings, making good by readiness their lack of years and boldly venturing to take their share in the expedition. Many women also behaved themselves more stoutly than their nature allows, and snatching up any weapon that came next to hand, followed vainly with the rest, only recognising the weakness of their sex when they found themselves in action left behind. You might have seen old men too striving with their age, the mind drawing the body and in ardent desire for battle reproaching it for its weakness as a disgrace. So great grief took the city for the rape of Chariclea, and all the people, as if moved by one sorrow, without waiting for the dawn hastened forth together in pursuit.

THE FIFTH BOOK

THE PIRATE CHIEF

Thus was the city of Delphi occupied. What they did in the end I know not, saving that their pursuit gave me good occasion to convey myself away. I took the young folks with me to the sea that very night, and I put them on the Phoenician ship which was just preparing to depart. For as dawn was near and they had only promised to wait for me a day and a night, the Phoenicians thought now they would not be breaking the oath they had sworn to me. When we came they welcomed us very joyfully and forthwith launched out into the deep, using oars at first, but when a calm breeze blew from the land and the waves quietly came under our ship and in a manner smiled upon her, suffering her to go with full sail. She flew along and soon we passed the gulf of Cirrha, and Parnassus with his high tops and the rocks of Aetolia and Calydonia, and at sunset discovered the islands, which by name and figure are the Rugged, and the Zacynthian Sea. But why do I tell you this out of season? Why do I forget myself and you, and continue thus my tale, plunging you into a very sea of talk? Let us leave the rest of my story and sleep a little. For although thou, Cnemon, be not weary of listening and stiffly strive against sleep, yet I think that now you begin to quail, in that I have continued my talk far into the night. And besides this, my son,

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

age doth burden me, and the remembrance of my sorrows vexing my mind doth drive me to sleep.'

'Cease then! father,' said Cnemon; 'although it is not I who wish you to end; for that I should not do, though you were to tell your tale for many days and nights together; with such excellent pleasantness and singular suavity is it seasoned. But for some time now there has been a noise and tumult about this house. I have been troubled a little thereat, but forced myself to keep silence because of the great desire I had to hear your tale.' 'I heard it not,' said Calasiris; 'either because age maketh mine ears somewhat dull and hard—for age breedeth many infirmities both in the other parts of the body and chiefly in the ears—or else because my mind was wholly occupied about my tale. Methinks that Nausicles, the owner of this house, has returned: and, O ye gods, how hath he fared? 'In all things even as I desired' said Nausicles, suddenly stepping in to them. 'I know well, good Calasiris, that you were careful of my business and almost travelled with me in your mind. For I have perceived your good will toward me by divers courtesies shown me at other times, and also by this whereof I heard you talking when I came in. But, who is this stranger here?' 'He is a Greek,' said Calasiris; 'you shall hear more of him hereafter. But tell us quickly what good luck you had, that we may rejoice with you.' 'You shall hear in the morning,' said Nausicles. 'For the moment be content to know that I have gotten a better Thisbe. Now I need to sleep a little, to abate the weariness that my journey and my other cogitations have brought upon me.' This said, he went away to do as he told them.

But Cnemon was much abashed when he heard

Thisbe's name, and turned all his cogitations to the time past, with much and continual sorrow tormenting himself all the rest of the night. Calasiris, although he was fast asleep, perceived it at last, and sitting up a little and leaning on his elbow, asked him what he lacked and why he was so disquieted as to seem almost mad. 'Have I not cause to be mad?' said Cnemon, 'seeing I hear that Thisbe is alive?' 'Who is this Thisbe,' quoth Calasiris, 'and how do you know her, and why are you so grieved to hear that she is alive?' 'You shall hear all that when I tell you my story,' said Cnemon. 'But her I saw slain with these eyes, and with mine own hands I buried her in the herdsmen's island.' 'Sleep' said Calasiris; 'we shall know how this goeth ere long.' 'I cannot sleep,' said he. 'You may be still and quiet; but for my part I know not whether I can live, except I go forth secretly and make diligent enquiry how Nausicles is deceived, and how with the Egyptians alone such as were dead revive again.' Calasiris smiled a little at this and fell asleep. But Cnemon went out of their chamber and such things happened to him as one might expect, roaming in the dark through a strange house. Nevertheless he took all in good part, for his fear of Thisbe, being desirous in haste to rid himself of this doubt. At length after with much ado he had gone up and down in one place as though it had been different, he heard a woman, like a nightingale in the spring, dolefully lamenting and with sorrowful tunes, so that by her mourning, as if one had taken him by the hand he was brought to her chamber, and laying his ear to the door heard her yet complaining in this fashion: 'I, poor wretch, supposed that I had been delivered out of the hands of thieves and escaped the death I always looked for, and that I should now lead a life with my

dearest friend which, though wandering in a strange land, would have been to me most delectable. For there is nothing so troublesome and grievous that in his company is not tolerable. But the god that hath had charge of our business from the beginning and hath granted us but small pleasure, not yet satisfied, hath deceived us again. I thought that I had escaped bondage ; but now I am a captive again in prison. I was in an island and dark place before ; this present state is like to it, or rather truly worse, for he who both could and would by comfort abate my sorrows is violently separated and taken from me. A den of thieves yesterday was my inn ; and what was that habitation but a very hell or worse place ? Yet my dear lover being with me made it easy to be suffered. There he lamented me alive, and shed tears for me being as he thought, dead, and bewailed me as though I had been slain. Now I am deprived of all this ; and he is gone, who was partaker of my calamities and wont to share them as a burden with me. I am left alone, a lamentable prisoner, objected to the arbitrament of cruel fortune ; and do only retain my life for that I hope my most dear friend is alive. But, o my heart, where art thou ? What fortune hast thou ? Art thou also bound, who hast a free mind, not able to abide any servitude save that of love ? Well, save thy life at least and return to behold thy Thisbe again. For by that name thou shalt call me, whither thou will or not.'

Cnemon had suspected at the beginning something else ; but when he heard this, he could not abide to hear the rest. From these last words he concluded it was Thisbe herself and was within a little of swooning there at the door. After he had with much ado recovered his courage, fearing lest he should be spied of any man—for now the cocks crew a second time—he ran

back stumbling and hurting his toes, sometimes knocking against the walls and door posts, sometimes hitting his head on the gear that hung from the ceiling. When after much travail he came to his lodging, he fell upon the bed and all his body trembled and his teeth chattered sore. Indeed he would perchance have been in extreme peril, if Calasiris had not perccived it and comforted him and brought him to himself again. As soon as he was revived he asked of him the matter. ‘I am undone,’ quoth he ; ‘for that most wicked Thisbe is indeed alive.’ And therewithal he swooned again, and Calasiris had much ado to cheer him and comfort him.

Some god herein plainly was making a jest of Cnemon, some one of those also mock and sport with the lives of men. He would not suffer him peaceably to enjoy what was most pleasant to him, and mingled with pain that which was soon to bring pleasure ; either showing in this matter his own custom, or else because the nature of man does not admit of pure and unmixed joy. And so it was that Cnemon fled from what was most desirable, and supposed that to be fearful which was most delectable to him. The woman that wept was not Thisbe, but Chariclea. For thus it was. When Thyamis came into his enemies’ hands alive and was kept prisoner—the island being set on fire and the herdsmen who dwelt there fled—Cnemon and Thermuthis, the shield bearer of Thyamis, in the morning rowed over the lake, to spy in what case their captain was with the enemy : the manner of their journey was such as has been declared before. Then were Theagenes and Chariclea left in the den alone, who accounted even the extremity of their present dangers to be the height of joy. For this was the first time that ever they were by themselves,

delivered from all who might trouble them. Wherefore they took their fill without hindrance of kisses and close embracings, forgetful of all else beside as they clung to one another as if they had been one body, but content still to satisfy themselves with chaste love, temperating their affection with tears and cleanly kisses. For Chariclea, if at any time she perceived Theagenes to pass the bounds of seemliness and deal with her over wantonly, would rebuke him by telling him of his oath ; and he would suffer himself to be reformed with little labour and brought again to temperateness, in as much as he could master his desires although he could not master his love. But at length, though it were long first, they remembered what they had to do and were constrained perforce to be satisfied, and then Theagenes began to speak thus : ' That we, Chariclea, may enjoy one another and attain unto that which we have preferred before all other things and for which we have borne all our troubles, we both do wish and may the gods of Greece grant. But as all worldly things are unstable and incline diverse ways, and we have borne much and have much still to expect, seeing that we must now haste us to Chemmis, as we have agreed with Cnemon, and know not what fortune we shall have, and that further there is a great and wonderful deal of ground for us to pass before we can come to the land we hope for ; let us now arrange certain tokens whereby we being in one another's sight may know our secrets, and if it happen to us to be separated, may trace each other out. For a watchword between friends, which is kept in hope to find, is a great easement in long travel.'

Chariclea praised his device, and they agreed if they were separated, that Theagenes should write ' Pythicus,' and Chariclea ' Pythias' upon all famous

THE PIRATE CHIEF

temples, statues, monuments, and stones at cross-roads, adding 'has gone to the right, or to the left, or to such a city, village, or country ;' and that they should give besides the day and hour. If they met, it would be sufficient for one to see the other ; since they thought that no time would be able to obscure the tokens of their love. But for better assurance, Chariclea was to show her father's ring, which was put with her when she was exposed, and Theagenes a scar on his knee that a wild boar gave him. It was further agreed between them that her emblem should be a torch, and his a branch of palm. To confirm this they embraced one another and wept, pouring out their tears, methinks, in stead of libations, and for an oath using kisses.

When these things were thus ordered they came out of the cave, without touching any of the treasures that were laid up there. For they counted these goods unclean which had been gotten by robbery. But what they brought with them from Delphi and the thieves had taken from them, that they gathered together and carried away with them. Chariclea changed her apparel, and putting into a little pack her necklaces and garlands and sacred robe, that it might be more private, laid the rest of their worst stuff on the top. As for her bow and quiver, she gave them to Theagenes to bear, which was a passing pleasant burden for him, seeing that they were the proper weapons of the god who had power over him.

But as soon as they came near to the lake and were about to take boat they espied a band of armed men rowing over to the island. Sore dismayed at that terrible sight, they stood a great while astonished, as though by the greatness of their sorrow they were hardened against the injuries of fortune which still

so raged against them. At length, when the men were just landing, Chariclea desired that they should retire back, and creep into some corner of the den, and there hide themselves; and therewith herself she started to run away. But Theagenes stopped her and said : ‘ How long shall we flee the fate that followeth us everywhere ? Let us yield to fortune and withstand no longer the violence that is ready to assault us. What else shall we gain but fruitless travel, and a life of banishment, and the continued mockery of the gods ? Do you not see how to our exile they join the robberies of pirates, and go about with great effort and diligence to bring us into greater dangers by land than erst we have found by sea ? Not long ago they made a battle about us : then they brought down thieves : afterwards they made us prisoners : then they left us alone but at liberty making us believe that we might go whither we would : and now they have brought us into the hands of such as shall kill us. This war for their sport have they made against us, devising, as it were, a comedy out of our affairs. Why then should we not cut short this tragical poem of theirs and yield us to those who wish to slay us ; lest perchance, if they mean to make an intolerable end to our tragedy, we be forced to kill ourselves.’ Chariclea agreed not to all he said. Marry she thought that he justly accused fortune ; but it was no point of wisdom to yield themselves willingly into the enemies’ hands ; they were not sure they would kill them as soon as they had them, nor had they to do with so gentle and friendly a god that would make a quick end of their miseries, but would reserve them perhaps for a further bondage. ‘ That,’ quoth she, ‘ would be more grievous than any sort of death. If we submit ourselves to the injuries of these barbarous people, we

THE PIRATE CHIEF

shall be so shamefully handled as I am loth to imagine. Which thing by all means let us avoid as long as we can, measuring our hopes of the future by our experience of the past, how we have oftentimes been preserved from dangers even more desperate than these.'

Thereupon Theagenes said : ' Let us do as you will.' She went before and he followed her close, as if he had been tied to her. But for all their haste they came not to the den before their enemies. For while they were looking at those in front of them, they wist not that they were now compassed and enclosed behind by another band which had landed on the island in another place. Wherewithal sore abashed they stood still, and Chariclea ran under Theagenes' arm, that if she must needs die she should die in Theagenes' hands. Some of those who had landed made ready to shoot at them ; but after the young folks had looked upon them, their hearts failed and their right hands quaked. For even barbarous hands, it seems, do fear beautiful personages, and a right cruel eye will be made gentle by a lovely look. So they seized them and carried them to their captain, desiring to take the fairest of their spoils to him first. They had indeed nothing else to bring ; for though they compassed the island with their arms, as with a net, yet they could find nothing, seeing that all that was in the island was burned in the former skirmish, save only the den of which no man knew. And thus they were brought to the captain Mitrane, leader of the watch to Oroöndates deputy of Egypt under the great king ; who being hired with a great sum of money by Nausicles to seek Thisbe, as is aforesaid, had now come to the island. When Theagenes and Chariclea came into his presence, calling upon the gods to save

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

them, Nausicles by a crafty merchant-like device stepped forth and cried with a great voice : ‘ This is that Thisbe of whom I was robbed by the mischievous herdsmen, and now recover again, by benefit of you, Mitrances, and favour of the gods.’ Then he caught hold of Chariclea, feigning to be very glad, and whispered in Greek to her privily in her ear, so that none who were by should hear them, that she should say her name was Thisbe, if she desired to escape danger. And this policy took effect ; for Chariclea, when she heard him speak Greek, thought that he was planning something to her advantage, and ordered herself as he desired ; and when Mitrances asked what her name was, she said ‘ Thisbe.’ Then Nausicles ran to Mitrances and kissed him on the cheeks, and with praise of his good fortune made the barbarous man proud, saying that not only had he achieved other wars well but had brought this also to a prosperous end ; so that elated by his words and deceived by the name he thought that it was so. He was indeed amazed at the maid’s beauty, which even in her simple apparel appeared, as if the brightness of the moon should shine out of a cloud ; but the quickness of the trick prevented him from changing his mind and any chance to repent was taken from him. ‘ Well then,’ quoth he, ‘ now the maid is recovered, seeing she is yours, take her with you.’ And when he had said this, he delivered her to him, still looking back at her and plainly declaring that it was against his will, and because of the reward he had received before, that he suffered her to depart. ‘ As for this young man,’ he said, pointing to Theagenes, ‘ whoever he be, he shall be our booty and go with us, and be kept diligently to be sent to Babylon. For the comeliness of his body is such that he may wait at the

THE PIRATE CHIEF

king's table.' This said, they rowed over the water and departed one from the other. Nausicles having Chariclea with him came to Chemmis; but Mitrane, going to view other towns under his jurisdiction, without delay sent Theagenes with a letter to Oroöndates, who was then at Memphis, thus indited:

'Mitrane the captain to the governor Oroöndates,'
'I send you a young man of Greece, too good to serve under me and meet only to wait in the sight of our god, the great king; giving you leave to present this excellent gift to him who is master of us both, such a one as the king's court has never seen hitherto, neither yet shall hereafter.'

This was the contents of the letter.

But Calasiris and Cnemon, hoping to learn what they were ignorant of, came to Nausicles before day-break and asked him how he had sped. Then Nausicles told them all: how he came to the island and found it deserted and no man therein to meet them: how he had craftily beguiled Mitrane and gotten a certain maid who was there instead of Thisbe: and that he had sped better in getting her than if he had found Thisbe. For there was no small difference between them, but as much as between goddess and mortal woman. Her beauty was such that none could surpass it; but it was not possible to set it forth justly in words, especially when they could see her there before them. When they heard this they began to surmise the truth, and prayed him instantly to bid her come in straight-way: for they knew that it was not possible in words to express Chariclea's beauty. So she was brought in, and Nausicles—as she cast her eyes to the ground and had muffled all her face save her eyebrows—began to

comfort her and bid her be of good cheer. She looked up a little and, contrary to her expectation she saw and was seen ; so that they all three began to cry out together as if a sign or token had been given them, and you might have heard often these words—‘ O my father,’ and ‘ O my daughter,’ and ‘ O Chariclea indeed not Cnemon’s Thisbe.’ Nausicles for wondering had almost forgotten himself, astonished to see Calasiris weeping as he embraced Chariclea ; for he knew not what this sudden recognition scene, as if it had been in a comedy, meant. But Calasiris kissed him and said : ‘ May the gods give you, O best of men, the fill of all your desires, who have saved my daughter that I never looked for, and caused me to behold the dearest thing that I might possibly see. But, O my daughter, where hast thou left Theagenes ?’ She burst out weeping at that question, and after a while she answered : ‘ He that delivered me to this man led him away prisoner.’ Calasiris then besought Nausicles to tell him what he knew of Theagenes, who it was that had taken him, and whither he would carry him. Nausicles told him all, perceiving now that these were the children of whom the old man had talked so often, and in hope to find them had led a wandering life in sorrow. But he added that the knowledge would be of scant service, since they were poor and needy folk, and it was doubtful whether Mitrances would let him go even for a great sum of money. ‘ I have money,’ said Chariclea softly to Calasiris. ‘ Promise him as much as you will. I have about me the jewels which you know of.’

Calasiris was glad hereof, but fearing lest Nausicles should suspect what Chariclea’s offer was, he said : ‘ Good Nausicles, a wise man never lacketh, but doth measure his means by his wants, receiving so much

from the powers above as he deemeth right to ask. Wherefore tell me only where he is that keepeth Theagenes, and God's gracious liberality will not let us want but will give us so much as well may content the Persian's greed.' Nausicles smiled at this, and said : ' You will make me believe that riches come to you on a sudden, like the god in a machine, if you pay me first the ransom for your daughter. For you know that merchants, as well as Persians, are eager to get money.' ' I know it well,' said Calasiris, ' and you shall have it. There is every reason that you should, for you pretermit no kind of courtesy toward us, and of your own accord, without waiting for us to ask, agree to my daughter's restitution. I should first myself have requested this at your hand.' ' I grudge you not,' quoth Nausicles, ' and if it please you, come and pray to the gods—for I will do sacrifice—and crave that you may have goods to give me.' ' Jest not' said Calasiris, ' neither be of so little faith. Go and prepare the sacrifice, and when all things are ready we will come.'

They did so, and within a while there came one from Nausicles who called them and bade them make haste. They went forth joyfully—for by this time they had decided what to do—the men going with Nausicles and the other guests, for he made a public sacrifice, while Chariclea went with Nausicles' daughter and the other women, who comforted her diversely, but even so had much ado to persuade her to go with them. Indeed I know not whether she would ever have been persuaded if under pretence of the sacrifice she had not determined to pray for Theagenes. After they came to the temple of Mercury—for Nausicles made his sacrifice to him and honoured him more than the rest, as being the god who has most

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

care of merchants—and the offering was begun, Calasiris looked a little upon the entrails, and by the diverse changes of his countenance declared the pleasure and pains of that which was to come. While the fire yet burned upon the altar, he thrust in his hand and made as though he pulled out of the fire that which he already held in his hand, and said : ‘This price of Chariclea’s redemption the gods proffer thee, Nausicles, by me.’ And therewith he delivered him a princely ring, a passing heavenly thing. As touching the hoop, it was of electrum, wherein was set a bright amethyst of Ethiopia, as great as a maiden’s eye, in beauty far better than those of Iberia or Britain. For they have but a faint red flush, like a rose which hath broken bud and falleth now to leaves stained by the heat of the sun, while the Aethiopian amethyst is of a deep ruddy hue, as a flower unsullied in the spring. If you turn him about as you hold him he casteth forth a golden beam, which doth not hurt or dim the sight but maketh it much better and clearer. And his natural virtue also is more than that of the western stones, for he doth not bear his name without effect, but in truth will not let that man be drunk who weareth him but keepeth him sober at all feasts.

Of this quality is every amethyst of India and Ethiopia. But the stone which Calasiris gave Nausicles did surpass even these. For there was a picture graven on it representing certain beasts, which was done in this fashion. A boy, sitting upon a not very high hill to look about him, kept sheep, appointing for his flock their several pastures with his shepherd’s pipe, so that they seemed to be ruled and to stop at their feeding accordingly as he sounded his instrument. A man would have said they had golden fleeces, not

by reason of the workmanship, but for that the amethyst shining with his redness upon their backs made them show so fair. There were engraven also young lambs leaping up and down, and some by heaps went up the rock, other some danced round about the shepherd, insomuch that the top of the hill was made a shepherd's disport. Others skipped in the flame of the amethyst, as if they had been in the sun, and with the tips of their feet scraped the stone. Many of the young sort, being of greater courage, seemed as though they wished to go out of the circle, but were prevented by the workmanship which set a band of gold in the manner of a wall about the rock and them. And it was a rock in truth, not a counterfeit; for when the workman had wrought the gold about the outer part of the stone, he let it show here in its native truth what he desired, thinking it of no purpose to counterfeit one stone in another.

Such was the ring. Nausicles astonished at the strangeness of its coming and delighted even more at the value of the stone, esteeming the ring of more price than all the goods he had beside, spake thus: 'Good Calasiris, I did but jest, and when I asked you somewhat for the ransom of your daughter, it was but words: for I had determined to let you have her for nothing. But since, as you say, the glorious gifts of heaven are not to be refused, I take this stone sent by the gods, persuading myself that it comes to me from Mercury, according to his wont the fairest and kindest of all gods, who hath given this gift to you through fire, as may be seen still by the flaming thereof. And besides I deem that gain to be best, which without damage to the giver doth enrich him that receiveth it.' After he had said this he went, himself and the others, to the festal banquet, placing the women by

themselves in the inner part of the temple and the men in the outer precinct. When they had their fill of eating and the cups were set upon the table, the men made libation to Bacchus and sang marching songs in his honour while the women danced a ditty made in praise of Ceres. But Chariclea went apart about her own business and prayed that Theagenes might be preserved and guarded safe for her.

And now, when the banquet waxed somewhat warm and each man after his own sort solaced himself, Nausicles, holding in his hand a glass of clear water said : ‘ I drink to you in water, good Calasiris, and if you will toast us in return with that tale we so desire to hear, it will be more pleasant to us than all the cups on this board. For you hear how the women, as a diversion for the banquet, have begun to dance, and so your travels, if it please you to make report of them to us, will help on our feast wonderfully and be more pleasant to us than any dance or music. You have often before deferred the telling, as you know, for that your mischances overwhelmed you, but you can reserve it for no better time than this. Of your children, your daughter is safe here in our company, and your son by the gods’ help shall be recovered very soon, if you anger me not again by deferring your tale any longer.’ ‘ God’s blessing on your heart,’ quoth Cnemon to Nausicles, catching hold of his talk, ‘ who, though you have brought to this feast all manner of musical instruments, do now set light by them and leave them to the ruder sort, and yourself desire to hear of more mysterious things seasoned with divine pleasure. Methinketh you well understand the nature of the gods, who join Mercury and Bacchus together and add pleasantness of speech to the fineness

of your banquet. Wherefore although I have for just cause marvelled at the other sumptuousness of the sacrifice, yet I know not whether a man may by any means please Mercury better than by contributing to a banquet that which is the god's very own mark, a story.'

Calasiris agreed, both to do Cnemon a pleasure and also to win favour with Nausicles, because of what was to come. So he told them all, briefly repeating the principal points of what he had told Cnemon before, and of purpose passing over in silence what he thought was of little purpose for Nausicles to know. What had not yet been told, and did depend upon that which went before, he told after this fashion. 'When they came aboard the Phoenician ship and were gone from Delphi, they sailed at first as they would wish and had a very prosperous wind behind them. But when they came to the Calydonian Sea they were greatly troubled, since they had happened into a sea which of its own nature is disquiet and troublesome.' Cnemon at this desired him not to pass it by but to tell if he knew any reason for the raging of the waves in that place. 'The Ionian Sea,' said Calasiris, 'being brought from its great breadth into narrow waters, pours, as it were through a funnel, into the Crisaean Gulf and then, hastening to mingle with the Aegean, is checked in its course by the Isthmus of the Peloponnese, whose hill by God's providence perhaps was placed there lest the violence of the water should overflow the land on the contrary coast. Wherefore it would seem that the water is beaten back and piles up more in this part of the sea than in any other place, since that which is flowing in strikes against that which is running backwards, so that the sea begins to boil and the waves rise boisterous, by their mutual

clashings lifted up into mighty billows.' All those who were present praised and applauded this reasoning, declaring it to be true, and Calasiris went on with his tale. 'When we had passed this sea and had lost sight of the Rugged Islands, we thought that we discovered the heights of Zacynthus, lying like a dark cloud before our eyes. Therewith the master bade strike some of the sails, and when we asked him why he abated them and went more easily, seeing that the ship had a very good gale of wind—'Because,' said he, 'if we went with a full sail, we should arrive at the island about the first watch and there would be danger lest in the dark we run upon the sharp rocks hidden beneath the sea. It is therefore wisdom to lie out all night and take the wind in such proportion as shall serve to bring us to land there in the morning.' Thus said the master, Nausicles, but we did not do so; for at the very rising of the sun we were casting anchor in harbour. The inhabitants of the island who dwelt about the haven, which was not far from the city, came flocking to look upon us, as if we had been some strange sight, admiring the handsomeness of the great ship, as it seemed, which was built very fair and high, and saying that they recognised therein the excellent workmanship of the Phoenicians, and that we had wonderful good luck, who made so good a voyage in the winter about the time the Pleiads were ready to set.

The rest of our company, even before the mooring cables were fastened, left the ship and hurried off about their merchandise to the city of Zacynthus. But I—as I had heard by chance from the master that they would winter there—went to seek some lodging for us along the shore, eschewing the ship, for that it was unmeet by reason of the rudeness of

the mariners, and also the city, for that it was not convenient for the flight of the young couple. After I had gone a little way, I saw an old man, which was a fisher, that sat mending his broken nets before his door. I came to him and said : ‘ Good man, God save you ; tell me, I pray you, where a man may get lodging ? ’ He answered me : ‘ It was rent about a promontory hereby, yesterday, being caught upon a jagged rock.’ ‘ I asked not that,’ quoth I ; ‘ but you will do us great courtesy, if either you yourself will be our host or else show us some other lodging.’ To that he answered : ‘ Not I : I was not aboard with them. God forbid that Tyrrhenus should do so much amiss or be so hampered by his age. It was my lads’ fault, who knowing nothing of the rocks here in the sea cast their nets before they should.’ As I now at length perceived that he was somewhat hard of hearing, I shouted at him loud, and said : ‘ God speed you, sir, and I pray you tell us where we may find an inn.’ ‘ God speed you in return,’ quoth he, ‘ and you are welcome, if it please you, to abide with me ; unless indeed you are one of those who seek luxurious mansions and bring a great train of serving men after you.’ ‘ I have but two children,’ quoth I, ‘ and I am the third myself.’ ‘ That makes a good proportion,’ quoth he ; ‘ we are one more, as you will find, for I have two sons who dwell with me—my eldest sons are married and keep house themselves—and the fourth is my children’s nurse, because their mother died but a while ago. Wherefore, good man, come and doubt not that we will be glad of you, who are a man who seem to be some gentleman even by your talk.’ I arranged with him, and shortly after came back with Thcagenes and Chariclea, and Tyrrhenus entertained us gladly, and let us have the warmer part of the

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

house. Truly we passed that winter season very well conferring in the daytime together, and when we would sleep, Chariclea went to bed with the nurse in one room by herself, and I with Theagenes lay in another, and Tyrrhenus and his children in a parlour also alone took their rest. We did eat at one table all, and such things as were needful we provided at our own cost, while Tyrrhenus gave his guests abundance of the fish he caught in the sea, sometimes fishing alone and sometimes at our leisure we would help him. For he had all manner of ways to fish and for all seasons, and the place was well supplied and very convenient to cast nets ; so that many ascribed the gain he got by his skill to the benefit of fortune.

But this did not last long. As the proverb goes—‘Once unhappy, always unhappy.’ Chariclea’s beauty even in this solitary place, roused up turmoil. The merchant of Tyre, who had been declared victor at the Pythian games, with whom we sailed, came to me alone and was very importunate and vexatious to me, beseeching me, as if I had been her father, that I would give her to him for wife. He talked much of himself, telling me of his noble stock and showing his riches, and said that the ship wherein we sailed was his own, and that the greater part of the merchandise in it, gold, precious stones of great value, and silk was his also. He added also his late obtained victory, as no small increase of his honour and name, and a thousand things besides these. I alleged for myself our present poverty, and that I would never marry my daughter to one that dwelt in a strange country, so far from Egypt. ‘Leave this talk, father,’ quoth he ; ‘I count the maid herself to be a dowry worth many talents, even all the riches in the world. As for my country I will change it to yours, and will turn from my

proposed voyage to Carthage and go with you whithersoever you will.'

When I saw that the Phoenician would not give up his purpose but persisted vehemently in his determination, and refrained not from vexing me therewith every day, I determined with fair words to put off the matter, lest he should attempt force against us on the island, and promised that I would fulfil all his desire when I came to Egypt. But after I had by these means pacified him, God brought upon us one wave after the other, as the proverb has it. Tyrrhenus, not long after, took me to a secret place on a crooked shore and said thus to me : ' Calasiris, I swear by Neptune and all the other sea gods, that I have loved you as if you had been mine own brother, and your children as if they had been mine also. I will tell you of a thing that is preparing against you, very grievous and painful. It is not lawful for me to conceal it from you, since we both dwell in one house, and it is very necessary that you should know thereof. There is a pirate waiting for the Phoenician ship, who lieth secret under the side of this promontory, and sendeth out spies daily to inquire when your craft will sail. Wherefore look to yourself and take heed what you must do, since it is against you, or rather against your daughter, that their wonted savagery is now enterprised.' 'The gods,' quoth I, 'give you such thanks for these tidings as you deserve ! But how came you to know this, Tyrrhenus ? ' ' By reason of my craft I am acquainted with these pirates,' said he, ' and when I bring them fish I get a greater price from them than from other folk. Therefore yesterday when I was drawing my pots about the cliff yonder, the master pirate came to me and asked whether I had heard when the Phoenicians would leave the harbour.

When I perceived the subtlety of his talk : ‘ In faith, Trachinus,’ quoth I, ‘ I can tell you no certainty, but I suppose that at the beginning of the next spring they will sail.’ “ Will the maid then sail with them,” quoth he, “ who lieth at your house ? ” “ I cannot tell, quoth I ; but why do you ask that ? ” “ Because I love her in such sort,” he replied, “ that I am scant in my wits. I never saw her but once, but I know not whether I ever saw so fair a woman before. And yet I have taken many prisoners, some of them very beautiful.” That I might the better cause him privily to tell me all his plans, I said unto him : ‘ What need you to fight with the Phoenicians, and not rather without blood fetch her out of my house before they go away ? ’ “ Even pirates ” quoth he, “ use gentleness and courtesy to such as they are acquainted with. I am leaving her therefore for your sake, lest by taking her I should bring you into trouble; for the guests whom you entertained would be required again at your hand. Also I desire to have two things at once, the riches in the ship and the marriage of the maid, Whereof one I must needs forfeit, if I make the attempt by land ; and beside it would be very dangerous if such a thing should be enterprised so near the city, lest the rape should be perceived and pursuit made after.” ‘ When I had much commended him for his wisdom, I left him there and am come now to tell you of the snares which these villains have laid for you, desiring you heartily to devise how you may save you and yours.’

I went from him very heavy after I had heard this and thought upon many things, until the merchant by chance meeting me and falling in talk about these matters gave me a pretty beginning of a wise device. I concealed from him what suited me of that which

Tyrrhenus had told me, and opened unto him only this : that one of the men of that country, whom he was not able to withstand, was planning to take the maid from me by violence. ‘ I had rather marry her to you,’ quoth I, ‘ both for the knowledge I have of you, and also for your wealth ; but especially for that you promised to dwell with us in our country, if you have her. Wherefore if you desire to have her, let us sail hence quickly before we be prevented or suffer somewhat against our will.’ He was wonderfully glad when he heard this and said : ‘ Father, this is well devised.’ And therewithal he came and kissed me, and asked when I would advise him to depart ; for though it was unseasonable then, it was possible to get into some other port to avoid the snares laid against us, and there wait for the good weather of spring. ‘ Well,’ quoth I, ‘ if you will be ruled by me, at the beginning of the next night we will depart.’ He promised so to do and went his way. I came home, but told nothing of this to Tyrrhenus, although to my children I said that it would be needful in the evening to go aboard the ship. They marvelled somewhat at the suddenness of this and asked the reason ; but I put them off, saying I would tell them afterward, and that it was to our advantage now so to do.

After we had eaten a slender supper and were gone to bed an old man appeared to me in my sleep, whose body was dried up, but his thigh peeping from his girt tunic showed that in his youth he had been a man of might. He had a hat on his head, and it seemed by his countenance that he had been a wise and subtle man ; marry he halted a little as if he had gotten some wound in his thigh. He came near to me and smiling sourly said : ‘ My good sir, alone of all that have sailed by Cephalenia, and looked upon my house, and

counted it a great matter to know my renown, you have had no respect for me, but have held me so in scorn that you did not even pay me greeting, which every man doth, and that too though I dwell so near. For this you shall ere long be punished, and shall have like perils as I had, falling among enemies both by sea and land. As for the maid that thou takest with thee, speak to her in my wife's name, who sends her greeting, because she esteemeth her virginity more than anything in the world, and presages for her a happy and prosperous end.' I started from the bed in fear of this vision, and when Theagenes asked me what I ailed, 'We had almost forgotten,' quoth I, 'the going of the ship out of the harbour, and I was awakened in confusion by the thought thereof. Wherefore gather up your stuff and I will call Chariclea.' As soon as I gave her warning she came, and Tyrrhenus, when he wist of this rose also, and asked what we meant to do. 'Whatever we do at this time,' quoth I, 'is by your advice. We go about to escape from them that would do us mischief. May the gods keep you in safety, who have played the right honest man with us. One last favour I pray of you. Go over to Ithaca, and do sacrifice for us to Ulysses, and pray him to appease his wrath toward us. For he told me last night in my sleep that he was greatly offended against me, as if he had been despised and set at naught.' Tyrrhenus promised he would so do, and conducted us to our ship, and wept greatly, and prayed to God that he would grant us a prosperous voyage according to our hearts desire.

To be short, by the time the day star shone we were in the midst of the sea, the mariners at first being very unwilling, but at length persuaded by the merchant of Tyre, who told them that they fled from certain pirates that pursued them, of which he had

THE PIRATE CHIEF

warning. He meant to tell them this for a tale, and knew not that he spoke truth. The winds and weather were sore against us and the sea was very rough, so that in a great tempest we were near to be cast away ; yet at length, when we had lost one of our steering oars and broken the greater part of our yard arm, we arrived off a certain promontory of Crete. We thought it good therefore to tarry some days on the island, both to repair our ship and recruit our own strength. This done, we decided to sail on the first day that the moon appeared after her conjunction with the sun. The spring gales were now blowing from the west, and as soon as we started we were driven on by them for a day and night, our master steering his course for the coast of Africa. For he said that if the wind continued blowing and we kept a straight course we might get quite across the main sea, and that he was making all haste possible to reach the mainland or some harbour, insomuch as he suspected the barque astern to be a pirate. ‘ Ever since we loosed from the promontory of Crete,’ said he, ‘ he has been following us, and never declined one jot from our course, but pursues our ship as if he went our voyage with us. Indeed I have noticed, when I of purpose turned our ship from the right course, that he also did the same.’

When he had said this, some were moved and exhorted the rest to make ready for defence, but some made light thereof saying that it was customary for a smaller ship at sea to follow a greater as being guided by their more experience. While these things were disputed on both sides, it was the time of day when the husbandman doth unyoke his oxen from the plough, and the vehement wind began to wax calm so that in a little while it was almost down and blew softly

to no purpose on our sails, rather shaking them together than making any way for our ship. At length it ceased quite, as if at the sun-setting it had appointed to leave blowing, or rather—that I may speak more truly—to do them which followed us a good turn. For those that were in the barque, as long as we had wind, were left far behind our merchant ship, our greater sails, as is natural, receiving more wind. But when the sea grew calm and we were perforce compelled to row, the barque came upon us quicker than I can describe, for every one on board her, I think, was at the oars, while she was a light boat and answered better to the rowers' efforts.

When they were now close to us, one of the men of Zacynthus who had come aboard with us cried : ‘ We are undone, comrades ; this is a pirate craft ; I recognise Trachinus and his barque.’ All our ship was moved at this news, and was filled with stormy tumult in calm weather. Everywhere was noise, lamenting, and running up and down. Some fled into the nether parts of the ship, some stood upon the hatches and exhorted one another to fight, some were of opinion that it was best to go into the cock-boat and escape : until, before they had determined anything, the present danger appeased their ado, since every man must needs by that time put on his harness. I and Chariclea hung about Theagenes, who desired sore to fight, and could scarcely make him refrain. She said to him that she would not be parted from him by death, but that with the same sword and a like wound she would share his fortune. I for my part, when I perceived that it was Trachinus coming against us thought of something which might benefit us ; which indeed took effect. For when the pirates drew near and ran across our bows, they did not cast any darts

at us, but by going round prevented our ship from advancing, trying if by any means they could get her into their hands without a battle and bloodshed : in brief they were like to people besieging a town and desired to take the ship on conditions of surrender. ‘ Why be you so mad, unhappy folk,’ they cried ; ‘ why attempt to stir against such invincible strength which far surmounteth yours, thereby purchasing your certain destruction ? We will use you friendly, and now give you leave to take your cock-boat and save your lives if you wish.’ These were the conditions they propounded.

The men on board our ship, as long as they were without danger and the battle without blood, were very stout and said plainly they would not depart. But when one of the pirates bolder than the rest leapt aboard, and with his sword slew all he met, teaching them that wars are usually made with slaughter and death, and the rest leapt after him, then the Phoenicians repented of their ways and falling flat on their faces begged for mercy, for that they would do whatsoever they would have them. Although the pirates were now greedy to kill—for the sight of blood is a great incentive to fury—yet contrary to all hope, on command of Trachinus they spared them. The terms they made however were very cruel, and for all the counterfeited name of peace it was savage war indeed ; for the truce propounded was more intolerable than the battle. Strict commandment was given that every man should go out of the ship with one suit of apparel only, and he who broke this law should die. It seems that men set more store by their lives than any thing else ; for the Phoenicians, although all hope of the goods in the ship was lost, hurried away as if they had forfeited nothing but rather made a good

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

market, every man desiring to save himself first.

We were standing by ready to obey their decree when Trachinus came, and laying his hand upon Chariclea said unto her : ‘ This war doth not concern thee, my dear, but hath been enterprised for thy sake. I have followed you ever since you sailed from Zacynthus and for you only have I adventured these perils by sea. Wherefore fear not, but be of good comfort, and know that you shall be mistress of all this with me.’ Thus he said. But she—for she is a very prudent maid and well skilled to have regard to the occasion—harkening also somewhat to my advice, put away from her face all sad looks and forced herself to an alluring smile : ‘ I thank the gods,’ quoth she, ‘ who have given you a heart to deal more gently with us than the rest. But if you indeed wish me to be of good comfort and to stay here do this for me as a token of your good will. Save this my brother and my father, and do not let them leave this ship. For if they be separated from me I shall not live.’ Saying this she fell at his knees and held him fast with supplications. Trachinus was well pleased with her so holding, and of purpose deferred his promise. At length, moved by her tears to compassion, he was by her countenance forced to fulfil her wish, and lifting up the maid said this : ‘ I give this your brother to you with all my heart : for I see he is a young man of stout courage who may do us good service. As for the old man, who is but a burden without profit, let him stay for your pleasure.’

While these things were saying and doing, the sun had come round just to his setting and made the space between the day and night dark. The sea also suddenly, changing by reason of the hour or else by the will of fortune, began to wax rough, and a man

might hear a great noise of the winds arising. Soon a fierce storm swept down upon us, whose valiant blasts did much abash the pirates, by reason that they had all left their own barque, and were busy in our vessel plundering the merchandise, and knew not how to manage the greatness of the ship. Wherefore each part was ordered unadvisedly and each man began to practise what he had never done before. Some in confusion hauled at the sails, others laid hand clumsily to the ropes ; one ignorant fellow took the rudder, another, as wise as he, was in the foreship. The thing that brought us most into peril was not the tempest, which was not yet very great, but the unskilfulness of the ship master, who stood to it as long as there was a gleam of daylight, but when it was dark gave over his charge. As they were therefore now in danger of drowning and almost sunk, some of the pirates wished to return to their own barque. But they were dissuaded therefrom both by the force of the tempest and by the counsel of Trachinus, who told them that they could get six hundred such little barques, if they kept possession of the merchant ship and all the riches therein. At last he cut the rope whereby it was fastened to us, saying it would bring them into another storm and that it was well to consider their safety in the future ; for that it was a suspicious thing to arrive in any place with two ships, seeing it must needs be that inquiry should be made concerning those that sailed in the other one. He seemed to them to speak with reason, and one thing gave him credit in both ; for after he had cut the barque adrift the tempest somewhat abated. Still they were not at all out of danger, but rather tossed without ceasing by mountainous waves, so that they lost many parts of the ship and faced every kind of peril. That night

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

at last was spent, and about sunset on the next day we landed on the beach by that mouth of the Nile which is called Heracleot, coming thus to Egypt by chance, unhappy creatures, and against our wills. The others indeed were glad but we were very sorrowful, reproaching the sea for our escape, inasmuch as it had grudged us a death free from insult and committed us to land and the dangers we must expect there, now subject utterly to the pirates lawless will. What their will would be we could easily guess by that which the villains took in hand before they were scarcely ashore. Pretending to make a thank-offering to Neptune they brought wine of Tyre and many other such things out of the ship and sent some of their mates with a great deal of money to buy cattle from the borders adjoining, and charged them to pay whatever was asked at the first word.

These men soon returned bringing with them a whole herd of swine and sheep, and those who had tarried behind taking them, lit fires, flayed the beasts, and made ready for a banquet. But Trachinus took me aside, so that none might hear, and said: ‘Father, I am determined to take thy daughter to wife and marry her to-day, and I purpose to join that pleasant solemnity with our sacrifice to the gods. Wherefore lest you should be anything sad in the feast, if you heard not of this before, and that you might tell your daughter hereof and cause her to be of a cheerful courage, I have thought it good to tell you my mind. Not that I need your consent—for I have absolute power to do what I list—but because I count it more lucky and seemly also if the bride more cheerfully prepare herself being admonished first by her father.’ I praised his opinion, and made as though I were glad, and gave thanks to the gods that they had

THE PIRATE CHIEF

appointed my master to be my daughter's husband. But after I had left him I began to think on what was to come, and went back to him again and besought him that what he was doing might be performed more solemnly, and that he would appoint the ship to be the maid's bridal chamber, and give command that no man might go in and trouble her, so that she might at her leisure provide that which was meet to furnish and set forth a bride. For it were ill ordered if she, who was of good stock and rich, and what was most important shall be Trachinus' wife, should not be made as handsome as might be, even though time and place did not give her leave to be very trim. Trachinus was very glad at this and with all his heart promised that it should be so ; and therewith he gave charge that all such things as they should need should be carried out, and after that none should come near the ship. They did as he commanded them and brought out tables, cups, carpets, tapestries, works of Sidon and Tyre, and other such things as were expedient for the furniture of a feast : these things were carried out from the ship upon their shoulders without respect or order, which diverse men with great travail and thrifty usage had gathered together : but now fortune had prepared them to serve their prodigal banquet.

I took Theagenes with me, and when we came to Chariclea and found her weeping, I said : ' Daughter, all this is nothing new or strange : and yet you are weeping. Is it for what we knew before or for something fresh ? ' ' I weep for everything,' quoth she, ' but above all for what I must now expect and for the hateful good will of Trachinus towards me, to which this present occasion, it seems, has given strength. For unexpected success is wont to invite a man to

wantonness. But Trachinus and his hateful love will be sorrowful yet, which I shall prevent by my death. It was to think that I should be divided from you and from Theagenes, before the end that made me thus heavy.' 'You think,' quoth I, 'as indeed it is. Trachinus after the sacrifice meaneth to change the banquet into your and his bridal, and made me, as your father, privy thereto, who knew before the unreasonable love that he bare to you by communication that I had with Tyrrhenus in Zacynthus, but I did not tell you thereof, lest you should have been discouraged for fear of these mishaps, and seeing also that we might have avoided his snares. But, my children, since God would not let that come to pass and we are now in extreme peril, let us attempt some bold and courageous enterprise and face the climax of our dangers, whereby, if we have good luck, we shall live a free and noble life hereafter, or if we fail, count it an advantage to die virtuously and like brave men.'

After they promised to do what I commanded, and I had taught them what was best to do, I left them making such provision as was requisite, and came to that pirate who was chief after Trachinus—his name I think was Pelorus—and said that I had a thing to tell him for his profit. He was ready to listen, and after I had brought him where none might hear I said : 'Give ear, my son, briefly : for the shortness of the time will not suffer me to be very long. My daughter is in love with thee, and no wonder, as yielding to the better man. But she suspects that the arch pirate is making this banquet to marry her ; for he seemed to mean some such thing when he gave her commandment to deck herself somewhat finely. Wherefore consider how you may thwart him and take my

daughter yourself ; for she says she will rather die than marry Trachinus.' 'Be of good cheer,' quoth he ; 'for some time now I have been of the same mind as the maid, and have desired to have some occasion offered me to take the matter in hand. Wherefore Trachinus shall suffer me to marry her of his own free will, giving me her as the prize of honour for boarding the ship first, or else he will have but a sorry marriage, suffering at this my hand what he has well deserved.' When I heard him say this I hastened back for fear of suspicion, and coming to my children comforted them and told them how my device took good effect.

Within a little while after we went to supper, and when I saw them well wetted with wine and wantonly bent, I whispered Pelorus in the ear—for I sat next to him of purpose—and said : 'Have you seen how the maid is dressed ?' He answered me no. 'Well,' said I, 'you may, if you go privily to the ship ; for you know Trachinus hath given contrary commandment. You will see Diana herself sitting there. But take care for the moment not to look over boldly upon her, lest you purchase death for you both.' He tarried not, but, as if he had some very earnest business, arose and went privily to the ship. When he saw Chariclea there wearing a crown of laurel on her head and glistering garments garnished with gold—for she had put on the holy apparel which she brought from Delphi, to be a grace to her victory or a glory to her burial—and such other things about her as might beseem a marriage well, he was set on fire by the sight, as it was likely he would be, and desire and emulation pricked him forward. When he returned, it was evident by his countenance that he meant to do some mischievous thing, for ere he had well sat down he said : 'Why have I not the reward due to

him who first boarded the enemy's ship ?' ' Because you have not asked for it,' said Trachinus ' and what we have gotten is not yet divided.' ' Then I will have the maid,' quoth he, ' who was taken prisoner.' To that Trachinus answered : ' Except her, you may take what you will.' But Pelorus said : ' Then do you disannul and abrogate the law of pirates, which giveth him that first boardeth the enemy's ship and faceth the most dangerous part of the skirmish leave to choose whatever liketh him best.' ' I break not that law, good sir,' quoth Trachinus ; ' I rely rather on that other which biddeth underlings give place to captains. For my part I love the maid wonderful well, and mean to take her for my wife. And I say plainly that it is reason that I come first, and if you do not as I bid, you shall repent it with a blow of this pot.' Then said Pelorus to those that were by : ' You see what is the reward of our labours. So shall any of you hereafter be put beside your due, and make trial of this tyrant law.' Ah, what a sight was there then, Nausicles. You might have compared those men suddenly moved to the sea : so blind and foolish a quarrel drew them to so great a broil, being with wine and anger almost made stark mad. Some took this man's part, some this ; one sort would have the honour given to the captain, another said that the law and ordinance might not be broken. At length Trachinus bent himself to cast a pot at Pelorus, but he prevented him—for he was provided before—and thrust a dagger through his breast, and there lay he wounded to death. Between the rest there was a cruel battle, for as they met they spared not themselves, some to revenge the captain others to defend Pelorus his right, shouting all together and striking and being stricken with bats, stones, pots, torches and tables. I for my part

went a great way off, and from the top of a little hill looked upon them free from all danger. But Theagenes and Chariclea, doing as we had agreed upon, took their share in the fray. He came with a sword and joining one side fought as though in frenzy : she, when she saw the battle begun, shot with her bow from the ship in such fashion that she never missed one and spared none but Theagenes. She did not shoot blindly into the fray but marked down the man she went to kill, herself unseen and easily espying her enemies in the firelight. They knew not what the mischief was and some supposed it to be a plague sent from heaven, until at last every man was slain and Theagenes only left fighting hand to hand with Pelorus, a stout man and practised in many murders. Now could Chariclea's shooting do no more service, and though she was in travail to help, yet she feared some mischance, since the two were come to hand blows. But at length Pelorus was no longer able to stand against him, for though Chariclea could not help in act, yet with words she comforted, crying out : 'Now, my heart, play the man.' Then, as though her voice had made him strong and bold and declared what was the prize of that battle, Theagenes did begin to prove himself the better. Though he was sore wounded, he plucked up heart and leapt near Pelorus, and with his sword struck a full blow at his head. That indeed he missed, since the other avoided the blow a little, but grazing the tip of the shoulder he cut off his arm at the elbow-joint ; and therewith he fled and Theagenes pursued.

What followed next I cannot tell, but that he returned again and I saw him not, since I tarried on the hill and durst not walk by night in a place so full of enemies. But Chariclea espied him well enough, for when it was day I perceived that he lay like a dead

man, and she sat by him and wept and declared that she would kill herself, but held her hand because of a little hope she still had of his life. But I, unhappy man, could not speak to them, nor know the truth, nor comfort their distress, nor do what could be done for them, seeing that our troubles on the waves were followed without intermission by mishaps as great on land. For when I saw the day appear and was coming down the hill, I espied a company of Egyptian thieves running down from a mountain which stretched that way by seeming, who at once seized the young couple and soon after carried them away, and whatsoever else they could out of the ship. I followed vainly afar off, bewailing my fortune and theirs since I could not defend them and thought it best not to come among them, reserving myself in hope to help them afterward. But soon by reason of mine age I was left far behind, since I was not so well able as the Egyptians to run over the hills ; and now by your help, Nausicles, and the favour of the gods I have found my daughter again, myself contributing nothing thereto save tears and abundance of lamentation.'

Then he wept himself, and those also who were present. To be short the banquet was turned into such weeping as was mingled with a kind of pleasure : for wine in a manner maketh men ready to tears. At length Nausicles comforted Calasiris and said : ' Father, hereafter be merry and of good cheer : you have recovered your daughter and after one night only you shall see your son also. For in the morning we will talk with Mitrances and do all we can to ransom good Theagenes.' ' I could wish it with all my heart,' said Calasiris. ' But now it is time to make an end of our banquet. Let us remember God and conjoin to our offering a thanksgiving for her delivery.' There-

upon the libations were carried round ; and so the banquet ended. Calasiris looked for Chariclea, and when he saw her not among the company that went out, at last with much ado, by the telling of a woman, he found her clasping the feet of the god's image : and either because of the length of her prayers or the greatness of her sorrow she was fallen into a sound sleep. So he wept a little, and prayed the god humbly to grant her better success, and softly awakened her and brought her into the woman's chamber, sore ashamed belike that sleep had so overcome her unawares. Then she lay down with Nausicles' daughter, and waking thought upon her cares and that which after was like to ensue.

THE SIXTH BOOK

THE WITCH OF BESSA

So Calasiris and Cnemon rested in the men's chamber, and the remainder of the night passed more slowly than they desired and yet sooner than they thought, since the greater part thereof had been spent at the banquet listening to the long tale, of which they could not be weary, so pleasant it was. Without waiting for dawn they came to Nausicles and besought him that he would tell them out of hand where he thought Theagenes was, and bring them thither. He agreed and they set off together. Chariclea besought them much that she might go with them, but she was forced to tarry behind, inasmuch as Nausicles said that they would not go far and would shortly return again and bring Theagenes also. Thus they left her, wavering between sorrow for their departure and joy for hope of what she desired. They were no sooner out of the village, passing along the banks of the Nile, when they saw a crocodile, which crept from the right side to the other and dived under the water as fast as it could. The others were nothing moved by the sight, since to them it was ordinary. But Calasiris prophesied that it signified they should have some let and hinderance on their journey. As for Cnemon, he was so terrified—although he saw it not perfectly but only a glimpsing thereof—that he was within a little of running away. Thereupon

Calasiris, seeing that Nausicles was laughing, said : 'Cnemon, I thought that you were only afraid by night, for the noise and darkness thereof. But it appears that you are over bold by day as well, who are not afraid of names alone but of such things as are common and every man knoweth them not to be terrible.' 'What name of God or heavenly power is it,' said Nausicles, 'that this good fellow cannot abide ?' 'Nay,' quoth Calasiris, 'if it were a god or power of heaven I should have nothing to say. But it is a human name he trembles at, if any one speaks it ; and what is more to be marvelled at, not the name of any man who hath been famous for his renowned acts, but a woman's, and she too, as he himself says, dead. For yesternight, when you brought me home Chariclea safe from the herdsmen, he hearing the name I speak of—I know not why nor wherefore --would not suffer me to sleep, being still ready to die with fear, so that I had much ado to revive him. If I thought that it would not grieve him nor make him afraid I would tell you the name now, that you might laugh the more.' And therewithal he named Thisbe.

When Nausicles heard, he laughed no more, but stood in a study a great while, musing in his mind what Cnemon had to do with Thisbe, or how she had harmed him in any sort. Then Cnemon laughed loud and said : ' You see, good Calasiris, of what force this name is, and how it doth not only abash and fear me, but our good friend Nausicles also. It hath brought him to a wonderful change of his cheer. As for me, I laugh now because I know she is not alive. But lusty Nausicles, who not long ago mocked others in scorn—' 'Enough,' quoth Nausicles ; 'you have taken sufficient revenge upon me, Cnemon. But I pray you tell me ; by the gods of hospitality and

friendship and by the salt of kindness which, methinks, you have tasted at my table, what mean you by Thisbe's name? Do you know her indeed, or seek to frighten me, or is it a jest you have devised?' Then spake Calasiris: 'Now it behoves you, Cnemon, to tell us your tale; which you have oftentimes promised to communicate to me and have by diverse shifts driven off. Now you may do it very well, both to please Nausicles and also by your talk to take away the weariness of our journey.'

Cnemon consented thereto and told them all briefly what he had before told to Theagenes and Chariclea: how that he was born in Athens, and Aristippus was his father's name, and Demeneta was his step-mother. He told them also of the wicked love that Demeneta bare to him, and how when she could not come to her purpose, she awaited him with crafty tricks by means of Thisbe, who was suborned by her so to do. He added the manner thereof and how he was banished his country by the people, punishing him as if he had been a parricide; and how, while he was living at Aegina, one of his friends, Charias, told him that Demeneta was dead and the manner of her death, herself also being beguiled by Thisbe. After this he said that Anticles told him how his father was brought into misery by the confiscation of his goods, since Demeneta's kinsfolk gathered themselves together to condemn him, and made the people think that he had done a murder. Then he said how Thisbe fled from Athens with a lover of hers, who was a merchant of Naucratis. And last of all, how he with Anticles sailed to Egypt to seek Thisbe, that if they could find her they might bring her back to Athens, and deliver his father from that slander, and take revenge upon her: how after he had fallen into divers mishaps by

THE WITCH OF BESSA

the way he was taken by pirates : and how escaping from them he came again to Egypt and was taken by the herdsmen and there fell acquainted with Theagenes and Chariclea. And thereto he added Thisbe's death and other things in order, until he came to that which Calasiris and Nausicles knew well enough.

This tale ended, Nausicles had a thousand thoughts in his mind, sometimes thinking to tell them of Thisbe and himself, and then determining to delay a while. At last with much ado he held his tongue, partly because he thought it best so to do, partly since another chance stopped him. For after they had gone about seven miles and a half, and were almost at the town where Mitrances dwelt, they met one whom Nausicles knew well, and asked him whither he went so fast. ‘Do you ask,’ quoth he, ‘whither I go, Nausicles? As though you knew not what I have to do at this time? All that I do tendeth to one end, to fulfil the commandments of Isias of Chemmis. For her I till my land, for her I provide all things, for her I pass my nights and days in wakefulness, refusing nothing that Isias commands, although I gain nothing but grief and sorrow for my pains. It is to her that I carry now in haste this Nile flamingo, as my dear mistress hath bidden me.’ ‘How easy a lover you have gotten,’ said Nausicles, ‘and how light be her commands, when she bids you get her a flamingo and not rather a phoenix, which bird cometh to us from the Ethiopians and the men of Ind.’ ‘She maketh but a jest of me and my pains,’ quoth he, ‘according to her fashion. But tell me now whither and on what business you go.’ When they told him they were going to Mitrances—‘You lose your labour,’ quoth he; ‘Mitrances is not here now. This night with his army he has gone against the herdsmen who dwell in

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

the village of Bessa. For they with their captain Thyamis have taken away and kept a young man, whom he sent to Memphis to Oroöndates, to be carried thence as a present to the great king.'

When he had told them this he went his way, saying : ' I must in haste to Isias, lest this long tarrying be any impediment to me in my love. Even now perhaps with angry eyes she looketh about for me ; and she is very clever in accusing and blaming and finding fault with me without cause.' They were at first bewildered by his tale, and stood still a great while without saying any word, since they were disappointed contrary to their expectation. But at length Nausicles comforted them, saying they ought not to despair of all that they had in hand because of one disappointment, which would not last for long. It were best now to return to Chemmis, and there to consult of the matter, and then go again with better provision to seek Theagenes, having good hope to find him wherever he was, whether with the herdsmen or in some other place. ' We may not think,' said he, ' that this is done without the providence of God, in that we met with one of our acquaintance, who by what he told us has led us to where we should seek for Theagenes, and has taught us the way to the place where the herdsmen dwell, as to a certain mark.'

When he had said this he easily persuaded them ; for, as I think, they gathered hope besides from that which was told them. And Cnemon also by himself comforted Calasiris and bade him be of good cheer, for that Thyamis would use Theagenes well. So it pleased them to return. When they were come home, they found Chariclea at the door, looking for them in every coast. Seeing that Theagenes was not with them she set up a pitiful cry and said : ' Are you

THE WITCH OF BESSA

come home alone, father, as you went hence ?' 'Without doubt, as I may guess, Theagenes is dead. Wherefore I pray you by all the gods if you have anything to say, tell me, and increase not my sorrow by delay. It is a point of courtesy to tell a mishap quickly, since that causes the mind to be ready to resist the greatness of the evil and soon makes it weary of its grief.'

Then Cnemon, breaking off her over-bitter sorrow, said : ' For shame, Chariclea ! What fashion is this ! You are always ready somehow to prophecy the worst, and that too falsely ; in which latter point you do well. Theagenes is alive, and by grace of God shall be brought back safe.' And therewith he told her briefly how and with whom he was. Then quoth Calasiris : ' It seemeth by what you have said, Cnemon, that you were never in love. Else you would know for sure that things wherein is no danger at all are fearful to lovers, and that in the case of their beloved they trust nothing but the witness of their own eyes. In a lover's heart absence breedeth fear and heaviness. There is another reason also : lovers persuade themselves that they will never be parted, unless some cruel impediment procure their separation. Wherefore, Cnemon, let us pardon Chariclea, who doth indeed suffer from love's malady, and go in ourselves and consider what had best be done.'

This said, he took Chariclea by the hand, and with a certain fatherly observance brought her into the house. Nausicles, wishing to refresh them after their troubles and also now preparing some other thing also, ordained a more sumptuous banquet than was his custom, and placed them alone at table with his daughter, decking her in more brave and costly fashion than was wont. When he thought that they

were satisfied with the feast he spake thus to them : ' My guests—the gods are witnesses of what I say—your presence is very acceptable to me ; even if you will live here always and take all that is mine, even my dearest possessions, for your own. And since I count you not as strangers but as my lovers and true friends, what I bestow upon you will be no burden to me. Moreover, as long as I am with you I am ready to help you, if you wish, to search for your kinsman to the best of my power. But you know yourself that my trade of life standeth by merchandise, and that I cultivate the same as if it were a farm. Now therefore seeing that the westerly winds blow very commodiously, so that they make the sea easy to be sailed and promise good speed to merchants, and my business calls me as it were with a trumpet to Greece, you will do very well if you tell me your mind, that I may order my business to such end as may please you.'

At this Calasiris, after pausing a while, said : ' Nausicles, good luck to you on your voyage. May Mercury, who giveth gain, and Neptune, giving quiet passage, bear you company and be your guides. May they make every haven a good harbour for you and every city easy to trade in and kindly to your merchandise : inasmuch as you have entertained us generously while we have been with you, and now we have a mind to depart do suffer us gently to go, observing in every point the laws of hospitality and friendship. As for us, although it grieve us greatly to depart from you and your house, which you have caused us to take for our own, yet we must needs go seek those whom we hold most dear. This is Chariclea's determination and mine : but what Cnemon doth

purpose to do, whether he will travel with us to do us pleasure, or hath appointed to do anything else, let him now himself say.' Cnemon was going to answer and was just about to speak, when suddenly he burst out sobbing and the hot tears which trickled down his cheeks stopped his tongue. At length coming to himself again he said with a sorrowful voice : ' O human estate most unstable and full of all manner of changes, what store of mishaps hast thou shown as well in me as in many another man ! Thou hast deprived me of my kinsfolk and my father's house ; thou hast banished me from country, city, and all I love ; thou hast brought me to Egypt—and to say nothing of my mishaps on the way—hast brought me into the hands of the herdsmen robbers. There thou gavest me a gleam of hope by acquainting me with men who though they were in misery were yet Greeks, with whom I thought to live all the rest of my life. But this hope now thou seemest to be taking from me. Whither shall I turn ? What shall I do ? Shall I leave Chariclea who hath not yet found Theagenes ? That is intolerable and may not be done. Shall I go with her to seek him ? If we were sure to find him, it were well done to take pains in hope of a happy end ; but if that which is to come be uncertain, and we hap to fall into greater sorrow, no man can tell where my travels will end. What if, craving pardon of you and the gods of friendship, I now at length make mention of returning to my country and my kin ? By the providence of the gods, as I think, a good occasion thereto hath now been offered, seeing that Nausicles says that he intends to sail to Greece, lest if my father die in mine absence our house be left without an heir. For though I shall live in penury, yet that there should be left some of our stock by me is a thing very honour-

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

able and in itself sufficient. But, Chariclea, I would be excused to you especially, and I crave pardon at your hand, and pray you to show me this much favour: let me go with you to Bessa and I will beg Nausicles to tarry for me a little while, although he be in haste. Let me deliver you there to Theagenes, and be counted one that has well guarded what was entrusted to him, leaving you, seeing we part so well, with better hopes myself to speed well afterwards. And if we should fail of him there—which God forbid—I shall be free of blame; for I shall leave you not alone, but with Calasiris your good father who will protect you well.'

Chariclea perceived by many signs that Cnemon was in love with Nausicles' daughter—for a lover's eye is very quick to espy another who is like affected—and that Nausicles by what he said was planning a marriage and enticing Cnemon by diverse allurements. She judged moreover that he was now no meet companion for their journey nor yet free from suspicion, and made him answer thus: 'Do as it pleaseth you. I give you hearty thanks for what you have done for us already, and confess myself to be in your debt. As for the time to come, it is not needful that you should care for our business, nor run danger in other men's affairs against your will. God grant that you recover your country, city, and house; and do not disregard Nausicles nor the offer he makes you. As for me and Calasiris, we shall contend with all that may happen to us, until we find an end of our wanderings; and although no man bear us fellowship, yet I trust the gods will be our companions.' Thereupon spake Nausicles: 'The gods send Chariclea her heart's desire, and bear her company as she asks, and grant that she may recover her kinsfolk, inasmuch as she is

THE WITCH OF BESSA

of so noble a courage and excellent wisdom. As for you, Cnemon, be no longer sorrowful that you cannot carry Thisbe with you to Athens : you have me here, who carried her thence so craftily : for I am that merchant of Naueratis, Thisbe's lover. You need not lament your poverty nor think that soon you will be a beggar. If you will be ruled by me you will gain a great sum of money, and under my guidance recover your country and your house. And if you list to take a wife, you shall have my daughter Nausiclea, and a great dowry with her, and I will think that I have already received what is due at your hands, because I know of what kindred and house you be come.' Cnemon did not delay, but took that which before he desired and was now offered beyond his hopes, and said : ' All that you promise me I accept with all my heart.' And therewithal he gave him his hand, and Nausicles affianced and delivered his daughter to him, and commanding the marriage song to be sung by the housefolk began to dance first himself, making a sudden marriage of the banquet there prepared.

The others then turned to dancing, and with songs followed in a company to the bridal chamber, and all night long the house was lighted with such torches as are used at weddings. But Chariclea, departing from the rest, went into her chamber, and bolting the door so that none should trouble her, untied and cast abroad her hair, as if she were in a frenzy, and tearing her apparel cried : ' Well, let us too dance after his own fashion in honour of the god who hath care of my life. Let us sing to him with tears and dance with lamentations. Let the torch be cast to earth and the darkness resound, and let murky night rule the play. What a nuptial bower hath he made for me ! What

a marriage bed hath he prepared ! He holds me here alone and without my bridegroom, and doth widow me of Theagenes who in name only is my husband. Alas for me ! Cnemon is married, but Theagenes is roaming abroad, a prisoner perhaps and even held in chains. And that for me is happiness : I only pray he be alive. Nausiclea hath a husband, and is separated from me who until last night shared her bed. Chariclea only is alone and forsaken. I blame them not for their good fortune, O ye gods and heavenly powers ; I pray that they may have their heart's desire ; I blame rather mine own estate, that ye be not so favourable unto us as to them. To such an endless length have you drawn out our tragedy that it now passes all acting. But why do I complain vainly of the miseries the gods send : let the rest also be fulfilled according to their will. But if thou diest, O Theagenes, my only pleasant thought, and I be assured thereof—which God grant I never be—I will not delay to come to thee there. This very night I make my offering to thee—and therewithal she plucked forth a lock of hair and laid it on the couch—‘ And these libations I pour from out the eyes thou lovest so dearly ’—and then she moistened her bed with her tears— ‘ But if thou be safe, as thou oughtest to be, come and sleep with me, my dearest, appearing to me in my dreams. Yet spare me, spare me thine own maid, and use me not after the guise of married folk. Behold, I embrace thee and think that thou art here and lookest upon me.’

When she had spoken thus she threw herself on her face upon the bed and with sore sighing and pitiful mourning clasped her arms hard together, until a certain stupor and bewilderment cast as it were a mist before the understanding part of her mind, and brought

THE WITCH OF BESSA

her to sleep, and held her till it was bright day. Calasiris marvelled that he saw her not as he was wont to do, and searching for her came to her chamber ; where knocking somewhat hard and calling aloud —‘ Chariclea ’—he waked her at length. She was abashed at the sudden call, and came as she was attired and unbolted the door to let the old man in. Seeing her hair disordered and her garments torn about her breasts and her eyes full of water, he understood the cause ; and when he had brought her to her bed again, and caused her to attire herself, and cast a cloak upon her, he said : ‘ For shame, Chariclea, what array is this ? Why do you vex yourself so sore without ceasing ? Why yield you to trouble without reason ? Surely now I know you not, whom till now I ever knew to be of excellent courage and very modest. Will you not leave off from this wonderful madness ? Will you not remember that you are born mortal ; that is to say, an unsteady thing bending sundry ways on every light occasion ? Have pity on us, my daughter, have pity : if not for your own sake, yet because of Theagenes, who desireth to live with none but you, and accounteth it his greatest advantage that you are alive.’ Chariclea blushed when she heard him speak thus ; the more so thinking how she had been taken ; and after she had held her peace a great while, and Calasiris desired her to give him some answer, she said : ‘ Father, you have good cause to chide, but perhaps I deserve pardon. It is not any common or violent desire that hath forced me, unhappy creature, to do this, but the pure and chaste love that I bear to a man—although he has never touched me—and that is Theagenes, who now maketh me sad, because he is not here with me, and even more afraid, in that I do not know if he is alive or not.’

'As touching that,' said Calasiris, 'be of good cheer. You may think that he is alive and by God's favour will one day be joined to you; since we must give credit to what the oracle foretold to us, and believe also him who told us yesterday that as he was being carried to Memphis he was taken prisoner by Thyamis. If he was thus taken without doubt he is well; for there has been acquaintance and familiarity betwixt them before. Wherefore we ought not to delay but go to Bessa, and seek there, you for Theagenes, and I besides for my son: for you have heard ere now that Thyamis is my son.' Then was Chariclea in great thought and said: 'If Thyamis indeed be your son, then are we in worse case than ever we were.' Calasiris marvelled hereat and asked her why. 'You know,' quoth she, 'how I became prisoner to the herdsmen, where the unhappy beauty with which I am endowed forced Thyamis to love me. It is to be feared lest if he find us as we make inquiry and see me, remembering that I am she who dallied and drove off with divers deceitful promises the marriage which he meant to make with me, that he will take me and by force compel me to finish the same.' 'God forbid,' said Calasiris, 'that the vehemence of his lust should be such that he would disdain his father's countenance and not repress his licentious desire, if any such move him. But for all that, why cannot you invent some device to elude that which you so dread? You are very crafty, it seems, and skilful to make shifts, and delays against them that seek to have you.' Chariclea was somewhat merry at these words and answered: 'Whether you say this in earnest or in jest, let it pass for this time. But I will tell you the way that Theagenes and I devised, although fortune would not let us put it into practise, and I hope this time we may

be more lucky. When we planned to escape from the herdsmen's island, we decided to change our apparel, and wander about in the villages and towns like ragged dirty beggars. Wherefore if it please you, let us counterfeit this dress and play the beggar ; for then we shall not be so much in danger from those we meet. To beggars poverty brings safety and it is commonly a cause for pity rather than envy. Moreover thus we shall get our daily sustenance more easily ; for all things are more dearly sold to strangers who have need to buy and know not the manner of the country ; but they will be freely given to such as beg.'

Calasiris praised her device and made haste to be gone. Therefore coming to Nausicles and Cnemon they told them of their departure, and the next day after set out, taking no horse with them, though one was proffered them, nor suffering any man to bear them company, save that Nausicles and Cnemon and the rest of the house started them on their way. Nausiclea also went, begging leave of her father so to do, inasmuch as the love she bare to Chariclea was stronger than her nuptial modesty. When they had accompanied them almost three quarters of a mile, they took their last leave and farewell, each after his kind, and shook hands ; and after they had shed a great many tears, and prayed that the parting might be lucky to them, and Cnemon craved pardon for that he went not with them by reason of his new marriage and told them that if he could get occasion he would follow them, they left each other, and they went back to Chemnis, while Chariclea and Calasiris turned themselves into beggar's dress, and put on such ill favoured clouts as they had provided before for that purpose. This done, Chariclea befouled her face with mud and soot, and tied a part of a dirty veil about her

head suffering it to hang ill-favouredly over her eyes instead of a bonne grace. She had moreover a scrip under her arm, as though she would put pieces of bread and broken meat therein ; but indeed it was to carry the holy vesture which she brought from Delphi ; her crown, and the rest of the tokens which her mother laid forth with her. Calasiris for his part carried Chariclea's quiver, wrapped in a torn and naughty piece of leather, the wrong end downward on his shoulders, as if it had been some other thing ; and used her bow—which as soon as it was unbent stood very straight—for a staff, leaning very heavily thereon. And if he saw any man coming, he would of purpose make his back more crooked than his age required, and go lame of one leg, and sometimes be led of Chariclea by the hand.

After they had learned to play their parts, jesting one at the other and saying how well their garb suited, and had besought the god who had their affairs in charge that he would be content with that which was past and suffer their evil luck to proceed no further, they went to Bessa ; where, hoping to find Theagenes and Thyamis, they failed of their purpose. For coming near to Bessa about sunset they beheld a great slaughter of men lately made, of whom the most were Persians, as might easily be known by their armour, and a few of those that dwelt there also. They might conjecture there had been a battle, but they knew not who the parties were that had fought. They ranged about the dead bodies, looking to see if any of their friends were slain—for hearts in fear, careful for what they love best, do oftentimes expect the worst—until at last they saw an old woman who lay upon the dead body of one of the countrymen and wailed wonderfully. They determined therefore, if

THE WITCH OF BESSA

they could, to inquire somewhat of her ; and so, coming to her, attempted at first to comfort her and appease her great sorrow. Which done, they asked for whom she lamented and what battle had been there —Calasiris talking to her in the Egyptian tongue—and she told them all in few words : that she sorrowed for her son, and came of purpose to these dead bodies that some armed man might run on her and kill her ; and in the meantime she would do such rites to her son as she was able with tears and lamentations. As touching the battle she told them thus : ‘ There was a strange young man, of goodly stature and of excellent beauty, carried to Memphis to Oroöndates the great king’s deputy, a prisoner sent, they said, as a great present from Mitrane the captain of the watch. Our men, who dwell in this village ’—showing them a village hard by—‘ came out and took the young man away, saying, whether in truth or for a pretext, that they were acquainted with him. When Mitrane heard of this, being angry—and good cause why—he led his army hither two days ago. Now the people of this village are very warlike, and live ever by plunder, and set not a straw by death, and have taken therefore from me, as well as from other women at other times our husbands and our children. So, when they knew certainly of his coming, they placed their ambushment in places convenient for this purpose, and when their enemies came among them they easily subdued them, some attacking in front and others from the ambush, with clamour setting on the Persians’ backs. Mitrane was slain as he fought with the foremost, and the greater part of his men with him, for being inclosed they had no way to flee ; and a few of our people were killed also. Of whom by the wrath of God, my son was one, who had a wound in his

breast with a Persian dart, as you see. For him thus slain do I, unhappy creature, sorrow; and shall I fear do the like hereafter for him who is still alive, because yesterday he went with the rest against the inhabitants of Memphis.' Calasiris asked her why they took upon them that expedition. The old woman answered that she had heard her son who was still alive say that they knew they were now in no small peril but rather in danger of all they had, since they had slain the king's soldiers and the captain of his host. Prince Oroöndates had a great company of men with him at Memphis, and as soon as he heard thereof, would come and compass the village about, and revenge this injury by the destruction of all the inhabitants. Therefore they determined, seeing their danger, to redeem their great attempt with one still greater, if they could, and to anticipate Oroöndates' attack; thinking that if they came on a sudden, either they would kill him in Memphis, or if he were not there, being busied, as report goes, with the E thiopian war, they would the sooner force the city to yield, as being void of defenders. Thus they themselves would be safe afterwards, and moreover would do their captain Thyamis service by recovering the office of the priesthood which his younger brother by unjust violence withholdeth from him. And if all their hopes failed, then were they determined valiantly to die and not to come into the Persians' hands to be scorned and tormented by them. 'But,' quoth she, 'strangers, whither go ye?' 'To the village,' said Calasiris. 'It is not safe,' said she, 'to mingle with those of us that are left, seeing that you are not known and come at this unseasonable hour.' 'If you will vouchsafe to entertain us,' said Calasiris, 'we hope we shall be unharmed.' 'I cannot now,' she answered, 'for I |

must do certain night sacrifices. But if you can wait—and indeed there is no remedy; you must, whether you will or not—get you into some place away from these dead bodies to pass the night, and in the morning I promise I will entertain you and be your warrant.'

Thus she said. Calasiris told Chariclea all and took her with him and they went their way. And having gone a little past those bodies, they chanced upon a little hill. There he laid him down with her quiver under his head, and Chariclea sat upon her scrip instead of a stool. The moon had just risen, lightening all things with her brightness, for she was now three days past the full; and Calasiris, being an old man and weary with his travels, fell fast asleep. But Chariclea, by reason of the cares that troubled her, slept not that night but beheld a wicked and abominable play, such as the women of Egypt do commonly perform. The old woman thinking she had now gotten a time wherein she would neither be seen nor troubled of any, first digged a trench, then made a fire on both sides thereof, and in the midst laid her son's body. Then taking an earthen pot from a three-footed stool which stood thereby she poured honey into the trench; out of another pot she poured milk, and from the third a libation of wine. Lastly she cast into the trench a lump of dough hardened in the fire, which was made like a man and crowned with a garland of laurel and fennel. This done, she took up a sword which lay among the dead men's shields, and behaving herself as if she had been in a Bacchic frenzy, said many prayers to the moon in strange outlandish terms. Then she cut her arm and with a branch of laurel besprinkled the fire with her blood; and after doing many monstrous and strange things beside these, at length bowing down to her dead son's

body and saying somewhat in his ear, she awakened him, and by force of her witchcraft made him suddenly to stand. Chariclea, who hitherto had been looking not without fear, trembled with horror and was utterly discomfited by that wonderful sight, so that she awaked Calasiris and caused him also to behold the spectacle. They could not be seen in their dark corner, but they saw easily what she did by the light of the fire, and heard also what she said, for they were not very far off and the old woman spake very loud to the body. Her question was this : ‘Would his brother, her son who was yet alive, return safe or no ?’ The body made no answer, but by nodding gave his mother a doubtful hope of success according to her wish, and then fell down upon its face again. But she turned it over on its back and ceased not to ask that question, with more earnest enforcements, it seemed, speaking in his ear. Sometimes she leapt, sword in hand, to the trench, sometimes to the fire, and at length she made the body stand upright again and asked the same question, compelling him to answer not by nods and becks but plainly by word of mouth. While this was doing, Chariclea begged Calasiris earnestly that they might go near and ask the old woman some tidings of Theagenes. But he would not go, saying that the sight was wicked although they were compelled to endure it. It was not becoming for priests either to take delight or be present when such things were doing. Their prescience came from lawful sacrifice and virtuous prayer ; the knowledge of sorcerers from traffic with dead bodies in the ground, such as this chance had allowed them to see the Egyptian woman use.

While he spake thus, the dead body cried out very terribly with a hollow voice, as if it had come out of

a deep cave, saying : ‘ Mother, at the first I spared thee, and suffered thee to sin against nature and break the laws of destiny, attempting by incantations to make those things move which by nature are immovable. For even dead men, in so far as they may, have reverence towards their parents. But since thou hast thyself destroyed this, and proceedest in the wicked and shameful deeds which thou didst at first begin, and art not content that a dead body stand up but wilt compel him to speak also, caring nothing for my burial and barring me from the company of the other spirits for the sake of thy own private need : hear now that which till now I forbore to tell thee— Neither shall thy son come safe home, nor thyself escape death by the sword. As thou hast spent thy life in such wicked deeds as these, thou shalt soon meet the violent death that is appointed for all such. Thou hast endured not only to do these secret and hidden mysteries alone, but in the sight of others also, betraying to them the fortunes of the dead. Of these one is a priest—and that is so much the better, for in his wisdom he knoweth that such things should not be published abroad ; and he is also well beloved of the gods ; and he shall, if he make speed, reconcile his sons who are ready armed to fight a bloody battle hand to hand. But the other—which is much worse—is a maid, who has seen and heard all that thou hast done to me, a woman distressed by love who wandereth, all the world over almost, for her lover’s sake ; with whom after infinite labours and infinite dangers in the furthest part of the world she shall live in prosperity and kingly estate.’

The body fell down when he had said thus. But the old woman perceiving that it was the strangers who looked upon her, armed as she was with a sword,

rushed against them like a wild woman. About the dead bodies she ranged thinking they were there in hiding, and meaning, if she could find them to rid them of their lives, as being crafty folk who by their spying upon her had caused her to have ill success in her witchcraft. At length seeking negligently in her anger for them among the bodies, a truncheon of a spear that stood up struck her through the belly ; and thus died she, fulfilling straightway by due desert the saying which her son prophesied to her before.

THE SEVENTH BOOK

THE WANTON PRINCESS

Calasiris and Chariclea after they had escaped this danger, both to get themselves out of their present perils and also hastening because of what had been foretold them, pressed on all with speed to Memphis. They came to the city just as those things were doing which the dead man prophesied. For they who were at Memphis had shut the gates a little before Thyamis came with his army from Bessa, since they had warning of his attack from a soldier who served under Mitrane and had escaped from the battle at Bessa. Thyamis then commanded his soldiers to lay aside their armour along one part of the wall, and to take some rest after their long journey, and determined himself to lay siege to the town. The citizens, who before were afraid of a great army, when they saw from the walls there were so few, despising them, gathered together the few archers and horsemen which were left as garrison for the town, and themselves taking such weapons as came to their hands, were eager to go forth and fight. But they were checked by a certain wise and noble man who said that although it happened that the governor was at war in Ethiopia, yet the matter ought to be brought before Arsace his wife, that the soldiers with her consent might be the readier to defend the city. As he seemed to speak well they all hastened to the king's palace, where in the king's absence the governors dwell.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Arsace was a beautiful woman, of tall stature, and singular wisdom to do anything ; she was too of high stomach because of the nobleness of her birth, as is likely seeing that she was the sister of the great king. But by reason of her unlawful and dissolute lust she was not without reprobation and blame. And besides other facts, she was in a manner the cause of Thyamis' banishment, when he was constrained to leave Memphis. For immediately after Calasiris went privily from Memphis, because of that which was told him by the gods about his sons, and could not be found so that it was thought he was dead, Thyamis as the elder son was called to the office of priesthood. As he was doing sacrifice publicly on his first entry into the temple of Isis, Arsace, seeing him to be a proper young man and of good age—for he was the handsomest man in that company and the best attired—cast many wanton looks and dishonest countenances at him. Which Thyamis regarded no whit, for he was both by nature very honest and well instructed from a child : and perhaps he did not even suspect the purpose of her play, or thought that she did it for some other reason, because he was altogether intent upon his sacrifices. But his brother Petosiris, who before had envied his brother the priesthood and had now well marked Arsace's allurements, took her unlawful enticements as a good occasion to endamage his brother. Wherefore he came to Oroöndates secretly and told him of her desire, adding very falsely that Thyamis had made a match with her. The governor suffered himself easily to be persuaded, because of the suspicions he had already conceived of Arsace. Yet he molested her not, either because he could not manifestly convict her, or else he thought it best to wink at it for reverence and honour that he

bare to the blood royal. But he threatened openly to kill Thyamis, and never ceased until he drove him into exile and placed his brother Petosiris in his room.

But all this was done before. At that time, when the whole multitude flocked to her house and certified her of the coming of their enemies and besought her to give command for the soldiers to assemble, Arsace, who knew thereof already, answered that she would not lightly do so, because she knew not how many her enemies were, nor who, nor whence they came, nor for what reason. It was therefore best first to go to the walls and see all their ordinances, and then provide such things as are possible and convenient. They thought she said well and went every man to the walls. There by Arsace's command a tent was pitched of purple silk garnished with gold, and she herself very costly arrayed came and sat in a high seat, with her guard about her glistering in gilt armour. Then she held out her mace in token of peaceable parley, and commanded the enemy captains to approach near to the walls. Theagenes and Thyamis, elected of the army, thereupon came and stood under the wall, clad in armour but with their heads bare, and the herald said unto them : 'Arsace, wife of Oroöndates, chief governor, and sister of the great king, asketh who you are, what your meaning is, and wherefore you are so bold to come hither.' They answered that their company were men of Bessa ; but for himself Thyamis said who he was, and that having been wronged by his brother Petosiris and by Oroöndates and deprived craftily of his priesthood, he was now brought to be restored again by the Bessians. If he recovered the priests office, then should it be peace, and the people of Bessa would return home without any more harm doing. If not, he meant to commit the matter to the

opposition of war and loss of men. Adams had good reason to be dissatisfied. The just & true revenge upon Britain for the behaviour he perceived against her and the entire continent, was that he and against her & the colonies, whether he could see no comparison with his conduct of the war and military leading and conduct of it, ought to be suffered.

All the people of America were dissatisfied at these trials, and demanded Trial and Judgment when it was now more suspended over the course of the nation's government, than of any they knew past. But Adams was now too old, & too infirm, to stand a trial before the English Courts, so he was remanded here. He was accused of treason, & fidelity, and owing to him, and those who had been with him, a broad Indictment might be brought. Then when the Court of Appeals and Sessions in New England declared his process to be null, and the one calling in name of the Commonwealth, and the other finding evidence of a new indictment, he was now sent to Boston, where he stood by his trial, and all the world of his friends. The fact of all the trials he had passed in Boston and were sent to Boston, and while he was in the court of the King, and the court of Common Pleas, were not well received. He had the right of trial before a Jury, but the juries given him longer held the people of Boston in their hands, than the juries did, and at great personal hazard, as I suppose, he durst not venture to speak of his shield fight with you, nor could any person then live without it. But when the great cause of Boston, he durst not say that your shield must be dropped, even in the Committee of the safety of the city, because the Committee durst not drop it. And this was a general and continual fear among Bostonians, that we should be tried and hanged for acts of ours in Boston. This is a history that a friend would tell, and it is history which

卷之三十一

He was a man of great energy and
determination, and he always worked
hard to achieve his goals. He had a
natural talent for business and was
able to build a successful company from
the ground up. He was also a good
husband and father, and he loved his
family very much. He will be missed
by all who knew him.

He is now here and we expect to
remain with him until Friday evening.
I have no objection to you or the rest of
the family coming down Saturday morning
and staying over night. We will have a
large dinner at 7 o'clock and you can
have a good time. I am sure you will
have a good time. I am sure you will
have a good time.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Thyamis saw him he said : ‘ Do you not see, good Theagenes, how Petosiris quaketh for fear ? ’ ‘ I see it well,’ answered he ; ‘ but how will you do this which you have taken in hand ? He is not a plain enemy, but your own brother, that you must fight.’ ‘ You say well,’ quoth he, ‘ and as I myself thought. By the grace of God I mean to overcome him and not to kill him. God forbid that my wrath and indignation should proceed so far that with the blood and slaughter of mine own brother I should either revenge injuries past or purchase honour to come.’ ‘ You speak like a noble man,’ said Theagenes, ‘ and one that well understandeth the force of nature ; but what will you have me do to help you ? ’ He answered : ‘ As to this battle, it may be despised. Yet inasmuch as the variety of human fortune bringeth many things to pass oftentimes contrary to our expectation, if I get the victory you shall ride into the city with me and live in equal authority with me. But if anything overwise than we hope happen to me, then you shall be captain of these robbers of Bessa, who love you well, and so live until God appoint some better end for your affairs.’

When these things were ordered thus, they with weeping eyes embraced and kissed each other. Theagenes sat down there, as he was, to see what would happen ; and thereby, although he knew it not, gave Arsace occasion to have her fill of looking upon him, viewing him round about and suffering her eyes to take such delight as she wished. But Thyamis went against Petosiris ; who did not wait to strike one blow, but as soon as he saw him come turned to the gates and would have gone into the city again. But he lost his labour ; for those who kept the gates would not let him in, and they who were on every part of the

THE WANTON PRINCESS

wall whereto he drew exhorted one another not to help him. He therefore cast away his weapons and fled as fast as he could about the city. Theagenes also ran, being both anxious for Thyamis and impatient to see all that was done. Marry he was not armed, lest men should think he meant to help Thyamis, but laid his shield and his spear at that side of the wall where Arsace sat, giving her leave to look upon them in his absence, and then followed them. Petosiris was neither quite caught nor yet very far in front, but always near to being overtaken, just so much ahead as one would expect an unarmed man to outrun one in armour. By this time they had run once or twice around the walls ; but as they ran the third time, Thyamis bent his spear against his brother's back and bade him stop, or else he should have a blow in the sight of the whole city, who looked upon them and was judge of that controversy. Then it was that some god, or else that fortune which doth govern human affairs, by a new scene augmented the play, and as though in rivalry introduced the beginning of another tragedy, bringing Calasiris on that very day and hour, as it were from the machine, to be a sharer in that race and an unhappy witness of his son's deadly strife. Although he had suffered much and tried every device, imposing upon himself exile and wanderings in strange lands, if at all he might escape that cruel sight, yet now overcome by destiny he was compelled to behold that whereof the gods by oracle gave him warning before. For seeing the pursuit afar off he knew by the pastwarnings that they were his children ; wherefore he started running faster than his age permitted him, forcing his strength that he might come before the end of the battle.

As soon as he got near and was now running hard

by them he cried : ‘ My sons, what means this ? Why are you so mad ? ’ But they knew not their father, since he was still in his beggars weeds, while their minds were set on the race, and went by him, supposing that he was a vagrant or one that was out of his wits. Of those that were on the walls some were amazed that he spared not himself but ran ever upon armed men, others laughed him to scorn as though he were mad. But the old man, seeing that he was not recognised by reason of his vile apparel, cast off the rags that were upon him, and let his hair fall unbound, and flinging away the burden on his shoulders and the staff in his hand, stood before them face to face, a reverend and a priest-like man. Then bending down and stretching forth his hands in suppliant fashion he cried out with tears : ‘ My sons, behold, I am Calasiris, your father. Make an end here, and refrain the rage which ill hap hath raised betwixt you, inasmuch as you have a father now and owe obedience to him.’ Then they began to quail, and falling at their father’s knees embraced him, looking at him with careful eyes that they might be sure it was he indeed. And when they perceived it was himself and no vision, there arose diverse, yea and contrary, thoughts in their minds. They were glad of their father, who contrary to their expectations was alive ; but they were angry and sore ashamed of the case he found them in, and they were in doubt also of that which after should befall. And while the people of the city marvelled and neither said nor did anything but stood in a manner like dumb pictures, because they knew not what it meant, another act was interlaced into the play. Chariclea, as she followed Calasiris, espied Theagenes afar off—for a lover’s eye is quick of sight, so that oftentimes, though it be a great way off, it will judge

THE WANTON PRINCESS

a likeness by a movement or a gesture—and as if she had been stricken mad by the sight ran to him like one distraught, and hanging by her arms about his neck said nothing, but greeted him with tears and lamentations. He seeing her foul face, of purpose beblacked, and her apparel vile and all torn, supposing her belike to be one of the makeshifts of the city and a vagabond, cast her off and put her away, and at length, when she would not let him go, gave her a blow on the ear, for that she troubled him in seeing Calasiris. Then spake she to him softly : ‘ Pythius, have you quite forgotten the torch ?’ Theagenes was stricken by that word, as if he had been pierced with a dart, knowing that the torch was one of the tokens agreed on between them, and looking steadfastly upon her was enlightened by the beams from her eyes, as by the sun appearing through the clouds, and clasped her close within his arms. To be short, all the multitude on the wall, where Arsace sat sore swollen and jealously looking upon Chariclea, had their fill of such wondrous doings as commonly are but seen upon the stage. A wicked battle between two brothers was ended, and that which men thought would be finished with blood had of a tragical beginning a comical ending. A father saw his sons in armour one against the other come to that point that almost before his eyes he saw his children’s death, and then made himself their love day and peace, not being able to escape the necessity of fate, but happy in that he came in due time to that which was determined before. Sons after ten years absence recovered their father, who had been the cause to them of bloody strife for his priesthood, and now adorn n him with the emblems of that holy office escorted him home. But above all, Theagenes and Chariclea, who played the lovers’ parts in this comedy, were most

talked of ; and since they had found each other contrary to their hope they made the city to look upon them more than all the other sights that were then to be seen. For great companies of every age came out at the gates into the open fields, and such as were youthful and newly come to man's estate drew near to Theagenes. Those that were of riper years, grown men indeed, approached Thyamis, since they by reason of their age knew him well. The maidenly sort, who now thought upon husbands, flocked about Chariclea ; while the old men and such as were of the holier kind surrounded Calasiris. Thus was there made a sudden sacred pomp and bravery.

After Thyamis had sent back the people of Bessa, and given them thanks for the pains they took in his quarrel, with promise that at the next full moon he would send them a hundred oxen, a thousand sheep, and ten groats apiece in money, he suffered his father, as he went, to lean upon his shoulder, who now because of his sudden joy began to wax feeble and very faint. Petosiris did the same on the other side ; and thus was the old man brought into Isis' temple with torches lighted and with great rejoicings and many instruments of music, so that the lusty youths began also to dance. Nor was Arsace behind, but with her train followed in brave wise and offered great chains of gold in Isis temple, under pretence to do as others did in the city, but in truth her eyes were always upon Theagenes, and she looked more on him than on any other. Not that she had an honest mind towards him ; and when Theagenes led Chariclea by the hand and put the crowd aside that she might take no harm, Arsace conceived a wonderful jealousy. But Calasiris, after he came to the inner part of the temple, fell upon his face, and held the feet of the god's image

fast and lay there so long that he was almost dead ; indeed he had much ado to arise when they who stood by called upon him. And when he had poured libations to the gods and made his prayers, taking the crown of priesthood from his own head he crowned therewith his son Thyamis, telling the people that he was old and saw that he should not live long, and that his eldest son by the law ought to succeed him, and that he had all things requisite, both in body and mind, to perform his holy duties. After the people by a great shout had declared that they approved what he did, he went himself to a certain part of the temple which is appointed for the priests, and remained there with his sons and Theagenes quietly ; while all the other people went every man to his own house.

Arsace also departed with much ado, but she returned divers times, pretending to use great diligence about the service of the god. Yet at length she went away, turning herself, as long as she might, to see Theagenes. As soon as she came into the palace she went straight to her bed, and cast herself thereon, attired as she was, without speaking a word, being a woman otherwise very lasciviously bent, but then especially inflamed when she had seen Theagenes' excellent beauty, which far surpassed all that ever she had seen before. So lay she all that night, tossing her body from one side to another and lamenting sore. Sometimes she would rise up, sometimes lean upon her elbow, sometimes cast her clothes almost all from her. Then she would suddenly fall upon her bed again and call in her maid, and without bidding her do anything send her away again. To be short, love had made her mad, and none would have known why, if an old woman called Cybele, her chamberlain and bawd, had not come into her room—for she could well

perceive all that was being done by reason of a lamp that burnt there and made Arsace's state more evident—and said : ‘ Mistress, for shame ! What ado is this ? Doth any new or strange disease pain you ? Hath the sight of any man troubled my dearling ? What man is so proud and mad as to despise your desire and will, and not rather be entangled by your beauty and account it a passing blessed estate to lie and have to do with you ? Tell me my dear daughter ; for there is no man so strong hearted but he shall be made to yield by our flattering allurements. Tell me quickly, and you shall have your heart's desire ; as in effect, I think, you have often-times proved before now.’

These words, and many more like them did the old quean speak, using diverse flatteries to make Arsace confess her pain ; who, after she had waited a while, said thus : ‘ I am more sorely wounded, mother, than ever I was before, and although I have used your ready help many times in like cases, yet I doubt whether now you will have a like success. The battle which this day was like to be fought before the walls, to all other folk was bloodless and concluded in peace. But to me it is the beginning of a worse fray, whereby I am like to lose, not one limb or member, but my wit and senses, because it shewed to me for my misfortune the young stranger who, when the two brothers fought, ran by Thyamis' side. You know well enough, mother, of whom I speak. There is no small difference between the brightness of his beauty and other men's, so that even a rustic who had never been enamoured of fairness would perceive it, and much more your manifold experience. Therefore, dear mother, seeing that now you know my grief, it is time for you to put

in practice all manner of means and old women's tricks and flatterings, if you wish your nurseling to live ; for there is no other way to keep me alive but to enjoy him.' 'I know the young man well,' said the old woman ; 'he was broad breasted and large between the shoulders, straight necked and comely, taller than the rest ; to make an end with one word, he far surpassed all other men. His eyes were a little fiery, so that he looked very lovingly and yet courageously also, his hair was smooth combed, and he had a little young yellow beard. To him a stranger woman, marry not uncomely but passing impudent, methought, ran suddenly and cast her arms about him and held him fast and would not go away. Do you not mean this man, mistress ?' 'Yes, even this one, mother,' answered she ; 'and you have done very well to remind me of that common impudent harlot with her painted beauty whereof she is so proud. Yet surely she is much more happy than I, seeing that she has gotten such a lover.' The old woman smiled a little at this and said : 'Mistress, take a good heart and be no longer sorrowful. The stranger counteth her beautiful for this day ; but if I can bring it to pass that he have the fruition of you and your beauty, he will soon change gold for brass, as the proverb is, and set naught by the harlot who now maketh so much of herself.' 'If you do this, my dear Cybele,' quoth she, 'you will heal at once in me two wounds, jealousy and love ; delivering me from the one and satisfying me with the other.' 'If I can,' said she, 'it shall be done. Be cheerful and take your ease and despair not before we begin, but live in hope.'

She said thus, and took the lamp away, and shut the

chamber door. Scarce had she seen the dawn when she called one of the king's eunuchs, and taking a maid with her, to whom she gave a few small cakes and other things necessary to do sacrifice, went to the temple of Isis. She came to the door and said that she must do sacrifice for her mistress Arsace, who was troubled this night with certain dreams and wished to appease the goddess. But the verger would not let her in, but sent her away, telling her that the temple place was full of sorrow. 'Calasiris the priest,' said he, 'after he came home from his long journey made a sumptuous feast in the evening with his children, and surrendered himself to mirth and merriment. When the banquet was done, he poured libations and prayed to the goddess, and after telling his sons that for this night at least they would see their father, and giving them charge concerning two young Greeks that came with him, that they should do what they were able for them, went to bed. Then either in the excess of his joy the passages of his breath became too relaxed and open, since his body was enfeebled by age ; or else it was that the gods granted him that which he craved ; but about cock crow he was found dead, his sons by reason of his warning having watched near him all the night. So now we have sent for all the priestly crew in the city, to do his death rites according to the manner of our country. Wherefore you must now depart : for it is not lawful for any man, except he be a priest, to enter into the temple or to offer sacrifice for seven days.' 'How will the strangers then pass this time ?' said Cybele. 'The new priest Thyamis,' quoth he, 'hath commanded a house to be prepared for them outside the temple. You may see them now approaching, and in accordance with his order going out of the temple for this time.' Cybele,

taking this for a good occasion to get them away and make it the beginning of her policy, said : ‘ Most excellent verger, you may do both the strangers and us a good turn, and especially Arsace the great king’s sister ; for you know how great favour she beareth to Greeks and how courteously she entertaineth strangers. Tell the young folk that by Thyamis’ command their lodging is prepared in our palace.’ The verger did so, suspecting nothing of Cybele’s deep designs but thinking that he would do the strangers a great pleasure, if by his means they procured their lodging in the prince’s court, and also render those who asked it of him a good turn, without harm or detriment to any man. So coming to Theagenes and Chariclea, who were very sorrowful and wept bitterly, he said : ‘ You are not doing as the laws and customs of our country enjoin, and that too although you had commandment that you should not mourn. You weep and wail for a priest, at whose departure hence our sacred doctrine biddeth you rather to be glad and rejoice, as one who hath gained a better estate and a quieter rest. You deserve pardon indeed, for you have lost, as you say, a father and a patron and one on whom all your hopes depended. Yet ought you not altogether to despair. Thyamis, it seems hath succeeded his father not only in the office of priesthood but in good will toward you, and hath given special charge for your welfare. Wherefore a fine lodging is prepared for you, such as would beseem rich men of this country, not to say strangers who are now at a narrow pinch and, low ebb, as may be deemed. Follow this woman then,—showing them Cybele—‘ and count her as mother to you both and accept her entertainment.’

Thus said he, and Theagenes and Chariclea consented ; either because they were overwhelmed by

this unexpected storm of trouble, or else that in such a time they were content to take any lodging as a refuge. They would have been more heedful, be seemeth, if they had suspected what tragical and intolerable things that lodging would procure them, to their own great harm. But then the fortune that governed their affairs, when it had refreshed them a few hours and given them leave to be merry for one day, suddenly sent upon them fresh causes for grief and brought them into their enemy's hands, as if they had yielded themselves to be bound, making them prisoners under colour of courteous entertainment without any knowledge of what should happen afterward. Such folly and blindness doth a life of wandering cast upon the eyes of those who travel through strange and unknown countries.

When they came unto the governor's house, and went through the sumptuous entrances, which were greater and higher than might beseem any private man's estate, furnished with the prince's guard and the other courtly rout, they wondered and were troubled seeing the palace so far too great for their present fortunes. Yet for all that they followed Cybele who comforted them in many ways and bade them be of good cheer, calling them her children and her dearlings, and promised that they should have excellent good luck. At length, when she had brought them to her parlour, which was far from the noise of the court, sitting by them alone without more company, she said : ' My children, I know the cause of the grief and sorrow wherein you be now, namely the death of the priest Calasiris who was to you in place of a father. Marry, tell me now also who you be and whence you come. That you are Greeks I understand, and by what I see I may guess

that you are of good parentage ; for a comely countenance and so elegant a beauty is a manifest token of high blood. I pray you, tell me of what country in Greece and city you be, and how you happened to travel hither. I desire to hear the same, both for your own advantage and that I may certify my mistress Arsace thereof also, who is sister of the great king and wife of Oroöndates chief governor, a lover of Greeks and all handsomeness, and very liberal to strangers, to the intent that you may come into her sight in such honourable fashion as your estate shall require. You will tell your story to a woman who is not altogether alien to you ; for I myself am a Greek, a Lesbian by birth, brought hither captive, and yet more fortunate here than in mine own country. I serve my mistress in all matters, so that without me she does nothing, save breathe and live : I am her mind, I am her ears ; to be short, I am all : I bring to her acquaintance good and honest men and I keep all her secrets.' Theagenes, comparing that which Cybele said with that which Arsace did the day before, and thinking how wantonly with fixed looks continually she beheld him so that her nods and becks declared scarce a chaste mind, gathered that small good would ensue to them from all this. But just as he made ready to reply somewhat to the old woman Chariclea said softly to him in his ear : ' In your talk remember your sister, I pray.'

Perceiving what she meant thereby, he gave this answer : ' Mother, you know already that we are Greeks. Know then this further, that we be brother and sister, who voyaging to seek our parents, taken prisoner by pirates, have had worse luck even than they, by falling into crueler men's hands. After we had been robbed of all our great riches, scarce escaping

with our lives, by the good-will of God we met with the noble Calasiris, and came with him hither, in mind to pass the rest of our life here. But now we are, as you see, forsaken of all men and left quite alone, and have together with our other parents lost him, who seemed and was indeed a father to us. Such then is our estate. As for the courteous and gentle entertainment we have at your hand, we give you very hearty thanks, and you will do us even more pleasure if you procure us a dwelling apart from other company, deferring the courtesy whereof you talked, that is to acquaint us with Arsace, nor bringing into her high fortunes our strange, banished restless life. For you know well that friendship and acquaintance ought to be between such as are of one condition.' When he had said thus, Cybele could not rule herself, but gave manifest tokens by the cheerfulness of her countenance that she was very glad to hear the words 'brother and sister,' thinking that Chariclea would surely be no impediment to Arsace's disports. 'O beautiful young man,' quoth she, 'you will not say this of Arsace, when you have tried her fashions ; she is conformable to all fortune and is ever ready to help those who are in undeserved mishaps. Though she be a Persian, yet in her nature she imitateth the Greeks, much rejoicing in those that come from thence, and is wonderfully delighted with their company and manners. Wherefore be you both of good cheer : you shall be adorned with all honour that may happen to a man, and your sister shall be of her familiar and near acquaintance. But what are your names that I must tell her ?' After she had heard them say 'Theagenes and Chariclea ' she bade them tarry there awhile and ran off herself to Arsace, bidding the door-keeper—who was also an old woman—to let no man

come in nor suffer the young folks to go any whither abroad. ‘Not even if your son Achaemenes come?’ asked the door-keeper; ‘for he went out a little while after you were gone to the temple, to dress his eye which is yet somewhat sore.’ ‘No,’ quoth Cybele, ‘open not, even for him. Lock the door and keeping the key with you say I have taken it away.’ And so it happened.

Cybele had scarce gone forth when Theagenes and Chariclea, being left alone, began to lament and remember their past mishaps, so that they both with one mind and almost with the same words bewailed each other. She cried oft ‘O Theagenes’; ‘O Chariclea’ oft said he. ‘What fortune have we!’ quoth he; ‘In what case are we!’ said she. And at every word they embraced each other; and when they had wept a while, they fell to kissing again. Last of all, when they thought of Calasiris, they bewailed him with tears; and especially Chariclea, because for a longer time she had known his love and goodwill toward her. Wherefore with tears she cried out ‘O good Calasiris; for I may not call him by the best of all names, ‘father,’ inasmuch as God hath every way cut me off therefrom. I know not the father who begot me. Charicles, who made me his child by adoption, alas! I have betrayed. And now I have lost him also who took charge of me and hath saved and nourished me hitherto; nor will the crew of priests suffer me to weep over his dead body as is accustomably done in burials. But surely, my nurse and saviour—yea and I will call thee father too though god refuse—here and now, where I may and as I may, I offer thee libations of my tears and do thee the death rites with my locks.’ And therewith she pulled out a great handful of her hair. Theagenes tried to

appease her and held her hands softly, but she lamented nevertheless saying : ‘ To what end shall we live any longer ! To what hope may we look ! He who conducted us through strange lands, the stay of our error, our guide to our country, the knowledge of our parents, our comfort in adversity, the ease of our ill fortune, the anchor of all our affairs, Calasiris is dead, and hath left us two, a miserable pair in a strange land, not knowing what is best to do. Now every journey by land, every voyage by water is by ignorance debarred us. A grave and courteous, an old and wise head, he hath gone from us, and never saw the end of all his kindnesses toward us.’

As she in this and such like fashion lamented, while Theagenes sometimes joined in her sorrow and sometimes concealed his own grief that Chariclea’s tears might abate, Achaemenes returned and finding the gate locked asked of the porter : ‘ What ado is here ? ’ When he was told it was his mother’s deed, he came near the door, and considering the cause thereof in his mind he heard Chariclea lament ; then stooping down he looked through the openings, whereby the fastening of the bolts are opened, and saw all that was being done within. He asked the door-keeper again who these were ; but she answered that she knew no more than that they were two strangers, a man and maid belike, whom his mother brought in a while ago. He kneeled down again to see if he might more plainly view them, and although he had never known Chariclea before he marvelled at her excellent beauty, and considered what a manner of one she would be if she were not in such sorrow and heaviness ; and with this wondering he privily fell in love with her. As for Theagenes, he thought that he

dimly recognised him as one he had doubtfully seen. As he was thinking thereon, Cybele returned, having told Arsace of the young folks' estate and called her most happy for her good fortune, in that of itself such luck had come to pass as a thousand devices and tricks would scarce have accomplished, and she now had her beloved in the same house with her, seeing and being seen in safety. With many such words as these she set Arsace on fire, so that she could scarce restrain her, in such haste was she to behold him. But yet she caused her to be content for a while, saying she would not have him see her while her eyes were swollen for lack of sleep, but a day after, when she had recovered her old beauty again. Thus she made her merry and full of hope that she would have her heart's desire, and took order with her what was best to do and how she should entertain the strangers.

When she came in then she said : ' Why be you so inquisitive here, my son ? ' ' Tell me,' quoth he, what strangers be those within and of what country ? ' ' It is not for you to know,' answered she ; ' keep a still tongue, and tell this to no man, neither be much among the strangers. So our mistress commands.' He went away then, as his mother bade him, and deemed that Theagenes was kept to serve Arsace's turn by night. And as he went, he said thus to himself : ' Is not this he whom Mitrances, captain of the watch, delivered to me to be carried to Oroondates, and from him to be sent to the great king, that one whom the people of Bessa took from me, at what time I was in mortal danger, so that I almost alone of all that carried him escaped with my life ? Or is it that my eyes beguile me ? Nay, I am well enough now, and see as I was wont to do. Moreover I hear that

Thyamis came here a day or two ago, and in a combat with his brother recovered the priesthood again. Surely it is he. But I will not say any word of my knowledge now. I will mark how our mistress is affected toward these guests.' Thus he talked with himself.

But Cybele, going in to the young folks, saw the signs of their lamentation. For though, when they heard the door open, they tried to trim themselves and counterfeited their wonted guise, the old woman perceived that their eyes were yet full of water. Wherefore she cried out and said : ' My dear children, why weep you out of season, when you should rejoice and thank your good fortune, for that Arsace thinketh to do you all the good that you can wish, and wills that to-morrow you come into her presence, and in the meantime shows you all manner of courtesy and gentleness ? Wherefore you must leave off these foolish and childish tears, and look up and deck yourselves and in every point do as Arsace would have you.' 'The remembrance of Calasiris' death,' quoth Theagenes, 'caused us to weep, who have lost the fatherly affection which was in him toward us.' 'These be but toys,' said the old woman. 'Old Calasiris, your feigned father, has yielded to the common law of nature and age. All now depends for you on one person : power, riches, dalliance, and the fruits of a flourishing youth : in a word, think of your own fortune and worship Arsace. Only be ruled by me how you must come into her presence, since she so commands, and how you must use her if she bid you do aught. For her stomach is high and princely, as you know, augmented by youthful age and excellent beauty, which will not have a nay, if it make any request.'

Theagenes at this was silent and thought within himself that in this talk was contained somewhat that was very beastly and not to be admitted. Within a while after came certain eunuchs, bringing meat from the prince's table on dishes of gold, which surpassed all manner of cost and sumptuousness. 'Our lady,' said they, 'sends you this as a first entertainment for honour's sake'—and setting down the dishes they straightway departed. The young folk at Cybele's bidding tasted a little of that which was set before them, lest they should seem to be scornful thereof; and this was done every evening for the days that followed. The next morning about the first hour the same eunuchs came to Theagenes and said: 'Right happy man, our mistress hath sent for you, and we are commanded to bring you to her presence. Wherefore go and enjoy that happiness which she vouchsafeth to very few and at seldom times.' He stayed a while, but at length, as if he were drawn by violence, he rose and said: 'Is her commandment that you bring me alone, or that this my sister shall go with me also?' 'You must go alone,' said they, 'and she also shall go alone another time. Marry now there are certain noble men of Persia with her, and it is a custom to talk with men by themselves, and with women on another occasion.' Then Theagenes stooped down and said softly to Chariclea: 'Surely this is neither honest dealing nor without suspicion.' She answered him that there was no gainsaying, but that he must go and make such countenance as if he would do all her will. So he followed with them: but when they told him how he should speak to her, and, that it was the custom for those who entered to fall down and worship her, he made no answer.

When he came in and saw her sitting in her chair of state, clothed in purple and cloth of gold, glorious with jolly jewels and her costly bonnet, finely attired and decked, with her guard about her, and the chief magistrates of the Persians by her side, he was not abashed a whit but rather the more encouraged against the Persian bravery. As though he had quite forgotten that whereof he talked with Chariclea, as touching worship and reverence, he neither bowed his knee nor fell down before her, but holding up his head aloft said : ‘ Arsace of royal blood, God save thee.’ Whereat when those who were present were offended and murmured against him as one rash and over-bold, in that he had not worshipped her, Arsace smiled a little, and answered for him thus : ‘ Pardon him as one ignorant of our customs and a stranger born in Greece, who by reason of his country despiseth our pomp.’ And therewithal she took off her bonnet, sore against the will of those that stood by : for so the Persians render salute to those who have first saluted them. And when she had bidden him to be of good cheer by an interpreter—for although she understood, she could not speak the Greek tongue—and told him to say if he wanted anything and he should have it, she sent him back again, commanding her eunuchs and guards to wait upon him. There Achaemenes seeing him again called him better to his remembrance. But though he marvelled and suspected the cause of the over great honour he had, yet he said nothing and determined to do that which first he planned. As for Arsace, she made a sumptuous banquet to the magistrates of Persia, under colour to honour them as she was wont to do, but in truth for joy that she had talked with Theagenes. To whom she sent not only part of her meat, as was her habit,

but carpets and coverings of sundry colours wrought in Sidon and Lydia ; she sent also to wait upon them a boy for him and a girl for her, both born in Ionia and about fourteen years of age. Moreover she urged Cybele to make haste and do out of hand what she intended, because she could wait no longer ; who indeed herself before this had left no way unsearched, but tried Theagenes' mind by all manner of means. Marry she did not tell him Arsace's mind plainly, but by divers byeways and circumstances she meant to make him understand the same, by telling him of her lady's good will toward him and by commanding not only her shape and beauty that all men saw, but on convenient occasions also those parts that were concealed by her apparel. She praised too her manners, for that they were amiable and nothing coy and that she had great delight in fine and stalwart young men ; the drift of all her talk being to see if he had any pleasure in the sports of Venus. Theagenes commended the good will that she bare to the Greeks, and her friendly fashions, and whatever else of that sort she talked about, and further for the same gave hearty thanks. But he passed over that which contained any dishonest thing, as though he understood it not at all. Wherefore the old woman was sore grieved and nipped at the heart ; for she thought he understood what she meant, but utterly despised and set at naught all her planning. She knew moreover that Arsace would abide no longer, but began even now to be angry and tell her plainly she could no longer contain herself : wherefore she craved the performance of her promise, which Cybele had deferred by divers delays, sometimes saying that the young man would but was afraid, sometimes that one or other mischance fell in the way.

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

By this time five or six days were past, and since Arsace had called for Chariclea once or twice and used her honourably, to do Theagenes pleasure, Cybele was compelled to speak to him more plainly, and tell him of her mistress' love without circumstance, promising that he would have a thousand good turns if he would consent. ‘For shame,’ she cried, ‘what lingering is this and refusal of love ! How can so fair a young man of good age refuse to lie with a woman like himself that dieth for him, and doth not rather account it an advantage to have to do with her. Especially when he need fear nothing, seeing that her husband is out of the way, and I who brought her up and keep her secrets provide the opportunity. You have neither spouse nor wife to hinder you ; although that is a thing which many men of sense have disregarded, knowing they would do no harm at home and would do themselves good by gaining great riches, and counting also the fruit of this pleasure a great reward.’ At last she began to interlace threats with her talk, saying : ‘ Gentlewomen and such as long for men will not be appeased, but conceive great displeasure when they are cruelly deceived, and punish the stubborn as if they had done them great wrong, and that not without cause. Consider : she is a Persian of the blood royal, as you confessed, and of great power and authority, so that she may honour whom she will, and punish such as withstand her pleasure, without controlment ; you are a stranger, alone without any to help you. Wherefore spare yourself and her. She is worthy of your regard, who is so furiously inflamed with your love which she of right ought to enjoy. Take care for the wrath which proceedeth from love, and beware of the revenge which followeth contempt : I have known many men who have repented afterward of

such a stomach as this. I have greater experience in these venerious affairs than you : this white head that you see hath been at many such contests, but I never knew any so violent and implacable as you.' Then turning to Chariclea—for necessity made her bold to speak thereof in her presence—she said : ' My daughter, help to me persuade this thy brother, whom I know not how to term. This will be for your profit also. You will not be loved a whit the less ; you will receive the more honour ; you will have riches in plenty ; and she will provide you with a splendid marriage : which things are to be desired even by those who are in happy estate, much more by strangers and such as are now plainly in great distress.'

Thereat Chariclea looked upon her frowningly and with burning eyes, and said : ' It were an excellent thing, and one to be wished, that good Arsace either had no such infirmity, or that having it she used it discreetly. But seeing that such a human chance hath happened unto her and she is overcome as you say, I would counsel Theagenes myself not to refuse the act, if he may do it without danger. My fear is that if it come to light and the governor hap to know of so shameful a thing, his deed will breed him harm and her no good.' When she heard this Cybele leapt for joy and embracing and kissing Chariclea said : ' My daughter, thou dost very well to have pity upon a woman like thyself and to seek thy brother's safety. Thou needest have no fear as to this matter : not even the sun, as the proverb is, shall know thereof.' ' Let me alone now,' said Theagenes, ' and give me time to consider.' Thereupon Cybele went out ; and as soon as she was gone Chariclea said thus : ' Theagenes, even such good fortune as God sends us contains within it more adversity than felicity. Yet it is the

part of wise men to turn their ill haps, as much as they may, to better issues. Whether you be in mind to do this deed or not I cannot tell ; although I would not be greatly against it, if there were no other way to preserve us. But if—as you should do—you deem it a filthy act which is asked of you, then feign only to consent, and with fair words feeding the barbarous woman's desire soothe her with hope, and by promises allay her hot passion, cutting her short by delays, lest in her rage she put some cruel device in practise against us. By the grace of God it is likely that time will provide a remedy for all this : but in any case, Theagenes, beware lest you slip from thought into the filthiness of the act itself.' Theagenes smiled hereat a little and said : 'I perceive that even in trouble you are not without jealousy, which is woman's natural disease. But be sure that I cannot feign any such thing : to say and to do dishonest things are both alike dishonest. Furthermore, that Arsace should give up hope bringeth another advantage with it ; she will cease to trouble us any more. While, if I must suffer, fortune and my own mind have inured me now to bear whatever betides.' 'Take care lest you bring us into great mischief ' quoth Chariclea ; and therewith she held her tongue.

While they were considering of these matters Cybele went to Arsace, and encouraged her to look for better success, saying that Theagenes had given certain tokens of consent : which done, she returned to her own lodging. That night she said nothing, save by exhorting Chariclea, whom at the first she made her bedfellow, to help her in this case ; but in the morning she asked Theagenes what he meant to do. He gave her a plain denial and bade her never to look for such a thing at his hand. With which answer she went

sadly to Arsace ; where having made report of Theagenes' stoutness, her mistress ordered that she be thrust out head foremost, and then went to her chamber and vexed herself cruelly on her bed. The old woman was scarce outside, when her son Achaemenes saw her sadly weeping, and said : ‘ Mother what mishap has befallen ? Has any ill news vexed our mistress ? Are there any evil tidings come from the camp ? Have the Ethiopians the upper hand of our lord Oroöndates in this war ? ’ And many such other questions. ‘ Tush,’ quoth she, ‘ thy prating is of no effect : ’ and therewith she made haste to be gone.

But he would not let her go, but went after her, and taking her by the hand besought her to tell her son the cause of her grief. Then she took him by the hand, and led him aside into a part of the orchard, said : ‘ I would never have declared mine own and my lady’s troubles to any other man. But seeing that she is danger and I in peril of my life—for I know that Arsace’s madness will fall into my neck—I am constrained to tell you, if haply you can help her who conceived and bare you into the world, and nourished you with these breasts. Our mistress doth love the young man who is in our house, not with tolerable or usual love, but so that she is almost mad therewith. Both she and I hoped that we should speed well, but we have lost our labour. Hence came all these courtesies toward the strangers and our manifold goodwill. But now, since the young man, like a fool and cruel fellow who will not be ruled, hath refused to do as we would have him, I think she will not live, while I shall be slain as having beguiled and cheated her with promises. In this case are we now. If thou canst help me with anything, do it ; if not, when thy

mother is dead, see that her death rites are duly performed.' 'What reward shall I have, mother?' said he. 'This is no time to boast myself, or with long circumstances to promise you help, seeing you be in such and so desperate a case.' 'Look for whatever reward you wish,' said Cybele. 'She hath made you her chief cup bearer for my sake already, and if you have any higher office in mind, tell me. As for the riches you shall have in recompense, if you save her, unhappy creature, of them there shall be no counting.'

'Mother,' quoth he, 'I perceived as much a good while ago, but I said nothing and looked ever for what would come of it. I care for no honour, nor regard any riches: but if she will give me the maid who is called Theagenes' sister to wife, then she shall have her heart's desire. I love the maid beyond all measure, mother. Wherefore, since our mistress knoweth by her own case what and how great a grief love is, she hath good reason to help him who is sick of that same disease, seeing also that he promises her such good fortune.'

'Have no doubt,' said Cybele. 'Our mistress will requite you without delay, when you have done thus much for her and saved her in such distress. Besides perhaps we may persuade the maid ourselves without troubling her. But tell me how you will help.'

'I will not tell you,' said he, 'until I have a promise confirmed by our lady's oath. As for you, say nothing to the maid, lest you mar your market against your will: for I see well that she too has a lofty stomach.'

She promised he should have his desire, and hastening to Arsace's chamber fell at her knees and bade her be of good cheer: 'By the grace of God, all shall be well, if only you send for my son Achaemenes to come to you.'

'Let him be called,' said Arsace, 'if you mean not to deceive me again.'

Achaemenes came in, and when Cybele had told her all the matter Arsace sware by express words that he should have his desire, as touching the marriage of Theagenes' sister. Then said Achaemenes : ' Let Theagenes henceforth be quiet. He is your bondman and slave, although he now behaveth himself so stubbornly against his mistress. ' How mean you this ? ' said Arsace. Then Achaemenes told her all : that Theagenes was taken prisoner by law of war ; that Mitrane sent him to Oroondates to be conveyed to the great king ; that he himself in taking him thither lost him because of the attack of the people of Bessa and Thyamis, so that he hardly escaped with his life : lastly he brought out and showed the letter from Mitrane to Oroondates, and said that if Arsace needed any more proof he would have Thyamis for witness. At this Arsace recovered some hope, and made no delay but came out of her chamber, and sitting in the seat where she was wont to hear and give judgment, she commanded Theagenes to be brought before her. As soon as he came she asked him if he knew Achaemenes, who stood near. He said yea. ' Were you not once his prisoner ? ' quoth she. Theagenes confessed that he was. ' Then are you my bondman,' said she, ' and shall do as my slaves, being ruled by my will whether you wish it or not. As for your sister, I have betrothed her to Achaemenes who is chief of my household, both for his mother's sake and his own good will toward us, so long delaying the marriage as to fix a day and provide such things as are needful for a sumptuous feast.' Theagenes was stricken by these words as with a grievous wound, but he resolved not to contrary her, but to avoid her force, as a man would shun the assault of some wild beast : ' Lady,' said he, ' the gods be thanked,

inasmuch as we are well born, that in our adversity it is our good hap to be enslaved to none other than you, who have already shewn so great humanity and good will to us when we seemed to be but aliens and strangers. As for my sister, though she is not a prisoner nor a slave, yet she is ready to do your pleasure and be called as you wish. Wherefore do with her as you think is right.' 'Let him be put among the waiters at our table,' quoth Arsace, 'and learn from Achaemenes to pour out the wine, so that he may be inured beforehand to serve at the king's board.'

This done, they went out, Theagenes very heavy and devising of what had best be done, but Achaemenes laughing and scorning him with words like these : 'Lo, you who were but lately so proud and lofty, the free man with head held high, who thought scorn to submit and worship Arsace, surely now you will have to stoop, or else with fists you will be taught to know your duty.' But Arsace, when she had sent all the others from her, said to Cybele : 'Now, Cybele, he hath no more excuses. Go then and tell the proud fellow that if he will be ruled by us and do our will, he shall be made free and have plenty of all things. But if he be still in a contrary mind and despise his lover, he shall understand that his mistress is angry and be made the vilest of all her slaves and tormented with every manner of punishments.' Cybele came and told him Arsace's command, adding of herself what she thought was suitable to persuade him. Theagenes desired her to wait a while, and took Chariclea alone, and said thus : 'Now, Chariclea, are we quite undone ; every cable, as the proverb goes, is broken, every anchor of hope is lost. Now are we no longer free men in misery, we have again become slaves.' And therewith he told her how. 'We are

subject to the reproachful scoffs and torments of the barbarians, so that either we must do our master's bidding or else be numbered among the condemned. Yet even this were tolerable if Arsace had not promised—which is the most grievous thing of all—to marry you to Achaemenes, Cybele's son. It is plain that either that shall not be done at all, or that I shall not see it, as long as life gives me a sword and weapons to withstand the same. But what shall we do? What way can we devise to break off my abominable act with Arsace and your shameful marriage with Achaemenes?' 'By agreeing to the one,' said Chariclea, 'you may prevent that other which concerns me.' 'Hush, hush,' quoth Theagenes, 'God forbid that the anger of heaven be so hard upon us that I, who never had to do with Chariclea, should unlawfully meddle with another woman. Nay, I think I have found a good remedy; since surely necessity is the deviser of all manner of shifts.'

Therewith he went aside to Cybele and said: 'Tell your mistress that I would speak with her alone, so that no man may hear.' The old woman, thinking this to be what they looked for, and that Theagenes would now yield, went hastily to Arsace and received command to bring him after supper, which she did. After she had charged the attendants to be still and let her mistress rest without stirring about the chamber, she conveyed Theagenes in privily; for every place was very dark, so that one might work secretly enough, and there was but one lamp in her chamber. When she had thus done she would have shrunk away, but Theagenes stopped her and said: 'Mistress, for this time let Cybele be here, for I know that she is very trusty to keep counsel.' Then taking Arsace by the hand he spake thus: 'Mistress, I

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

delayed the doing of that which you commanded me, not out of wilfulness against your wishes, but that I might provide security for myself. And now, seeing that fortune hath kindly made me your slave, I am the more ready to do your will in all points. But first I must ask you to grant me one thing, instead of the great and manifold benefits that you have promised me. Break off the marriage of Chariclea and Achaemenes. For it is not right, to say no more, that a woman of very high parentage should be matched with a bond slave. Else I swear to you by the Sun, fairest of the gods, and by all the rest of the gods also, that I will never do what you want of me, and before Chariclea sustain any violence you shall see me slay myself.' To this Arsace answered : ' Think not but that I will do what I can to pleasure you, since I am ready to deliver myself into your hands. But I have promised by oath to marry your sister to Achaemenes.' ' It is well then, mistress,' quoth he ; ' you may marry my sister to him, whoever she be : but her whom I love and is my spouse and all but wife I know you will not marry ; nor if you would, may you.' ' What mean you by this ? ' said she. ' I mean the truth,' he answered ; ' Chariclea is not my sister but my spouse. Wherefore you are released from your oath, and you can have a plain proof when you please, if you list to make a bridal feast for us.' This nipped her, when she heard that Chariclea was his wife, so that she fell into a great jealousy. But for all that she said : ' You shall have your desire, and we will appease Achaemenes with another wife.' ' Then I will perform my promise,' said Theagenes, ' when this is undone.' And therewith he bent down to kiss her hand ; but she leaning forward, instead of her hand kissed him with her mouth. So Theagenes went out

with a kiss of hers, but he kissed her not in return.

As soon as he got leisure he told Chariclea all—who heard some things that made her jealous also—and added moreover the strange end that his promise tended unto, and how by that one thing he had wrought many feats. ‘Achaemenes’ wedding,’ said he, ‘is defeated and a delay found for Arsace’s lust. But chief of all, Achaemenes now will set all on a broil, being offended in that he is beguiled of what he hoped for, and also because he sees me in better favour with Arsace than himself. He will know all this from his mother, since I provided that she should be there to hear what I said, wishing her to tell Achaemenes this, and also to be a witness of the familiarity which in words only passed between us. For although it is enough to have a clear conscience before God, yet it is well for a man in freedom so to lead his life—which lasteth here but a little while—that others also have good opinion of him. Moreover we may expect that Achaemenes will revenge himself on Arsace, being a slave born—for almost always that which is under obedience is opposed to that which hath authority over it—and beside he has been wronged, and beguiled of an oath, and sees another now preferred above himself. He knows of all her mischief and ill behaviour, and needs not to invent aught against her, as men being angry have oft attempted to do, but from the plain truth has his vengeance ready to his hand.’

After he had told Chariclea all these things and exhorted her yet to have a little hope, the next day he was taken by Achaemenes to wait at table; for so Arsace commanded. For that purpose she sent him costly apparel, a chain, bracelets of gold, and other rich jewels, part whereof willingly, part against his

will, he put on. When Achaemenes began to teach him how he should serve her cup, he ran to a table nearby whereon stood much plate, and taking a precious goblet in his hand said . ‘ I need no teaching, but will of my own head serve my mistress : I make no ado of matters so easy as this. Your fortune, my good friend, hath forced such knowledge upon you ; but nature and occasion can teach me what I have to do.’ Then he poured in wine softly, and holding the cup finely with the tips of his fingers and going with a seemly and fit pace, delivered it to Arsace. This draught set her on fire more than she was before ; for drinking and looking upon Theagenes at the same time she supped more of his love than of the wine. Nor did she drink the goblet quite off, but on purpose by craft left a little to drink to Theagenes. On the other side Achaemenes was sore vexed and filled both with anger and jealousy, so that Arsace saw him looking scornfully and whispering somewhat to those who stood by. When dinner was done, Theagenes said : ‘ Mistress, I pray you grant me this my first request, let none but me wear this dress and serve at your table.’ Arsace consented ; but as he went out wearing the accustomed garb Achaemenes came out also, and reproached him for his forwardness, and told him that such rash ways were very childish, and that their mistress only winked at them because he was a stranger and without experience : ‘ If you continue to be so wanton,’ said he, ‘ you will suffer for it. And this I tell you as a friend, and one who will soon be your kinsman ; for your mistress has promised that I shall marry your sister.’ Much more like this he said ; but Theagenes, with his eyes upon the ground, passed by him as though he heard him not, until Cybele came upon them, hastening to put her mistress

THE WANTON PRINCESS

to bed for the afternoon. Seeing her son looking gloomy she asked what he ailed. ‘This strange younker’ he said, ‘has been honoured before me both yesterday and to-day, slipping in and gaining the office of cup bearer. He has given us, her chief servitors, the go by, and standing near her royal person hands the cup, so that our honour, which is now but an honour in name, is utterly despised. It were ill enough that he should be preferred to us and admitted to greater and more secret privities, while we to our own hurt keep silence and aid him, but it would not be so grievous if he did not vent his insolence on us who serve with him and help him in his fine doings. But of that we will talk another time. For the moment mother, I would fain see my betrothed wife, my sweetest Chariclea, if that by looking upon her I may somewhat abate the grief of my mind.’ ‘What wife, son?’ quoth Cybele; ‘you seem to chafe at trifles and know not the greater matters. You are not to marry Chariclea now.’ ‘What say you mother,’ cried he, am I not worthy to marry her, who is my fellow-servant? Why so, I pray you.’ ‘Because of our good will and unlawful service to Arsace,’ answered she. ‘For though we set more by her than our own ease, and preferred her desire to our lives, doing all we could to pleasure her, yet as soon as this gentle and goodly lover of hers came into her chamber, the sight of him did so move her that it made her break her oath and give Chariclea up to him, in that he vowed that she was not his sister but his spouse.’ ‘Did she promise him, mother?’ said he. ‘Yea, son,’ answered Cybele, ‘she promised him, while I was by and heard it, and meaneth within these few days to make them a sumptuous wedding, and will marry thee to some other.’ Thereat Achaemenes groaned bitterly

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

and clapping his hands said : ‘ I will make this a sorrowful wedding for them all. Only help me to defer it for a while, and if any man ask for me, say I am sore sick in the country. That fine gentleman calleth his sister his wife ; as though we did not understand that he doth it only to disannul that which by promise was granted to me. Even if he embrace and kiss her as he doth now, yea even if he lie with her, it is no clear proof that she is his wife and not his sister. Nay, I will see to this, and with me the gods, whose religion is violated by the breaking of an oath.’

This said, anger and jealousy, love and disappointment, set him so on fire—which things were sufficient to trouble any man even if he were not a barbarian—that, without weighing reasonably what he meant to do, he yielded to the first impulse. That very evening he found means to steal away an Armenian horse, which the governor kept for processions and reviews, and rode off to Oroöndates, who was then mustering his army at the great city of Thebes, and making all manner of provision, both of men and weapons and also of all other things necessary for the war.

THE EIGHTH BOOK

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

The King of Ethiopia had beguiled Oroöndates and obtained half of what they contended for by winning the city of Philae, which always is easy to be conquered and by this quick stroke had brought him to such straits that he was compelled to prepare his expedition in haste and without due heed. The City Philae is situated upon the banks of the Nile, a little above the lesser cataract, about twelve miles and a half from Syene and Elephantina. As exiles from Egypt had once taken and inhabited this place, it was always a cause of dispute between the Ethiopians and the Egyptians. The Ethiopians declare that their borders stretch to the cataract, while the Egyptians claim Philae, as a prize of war, because their exiles inhabit the same. The city was continually under the rule now of the one, now of the other, being always theirs who came and conquered it, and at that time it had a garrison of Egyptians and Persians. The King of Ethiopia sent at first an embassy to Oroöndates and demanded Philae and the emerald mines there. But when, after sending many times, he still failed in his request, as has been said before, he commanded his legates to go a few days journey in advance, and followed himself with an army which he had long ago prepared, as though for another war, telling no man which way he would take. After he

supposed that his ambassadors were past Philae and had filled the inhabitants with security and carelessness—for they bruted abroad that they went with commission to conclude peace—he came suddenly upon them and cast out the garrison, who could not withstand the number of the enemy and their battering rams for more than two or three days, and so took the city, doing no harm to any of the inhabitants thereof.

Because of all this Achaemenes found Oroondates sore troubled, having been certified of all that had happened by one who fled from the city; but he troubled him a great deal more, because he came so suddenly and unent for. Wherefore he asked him at once whether any mischance was befallen Arsace or the rest of his household. He answered that there was, and that he wished to speak to him in private. When every man else was departed he told him how Theagenes was taken prisoner by Mitrane, and sent to him to be conveyed to the great king, if he thought it good; for the young man was worthy to be placed in the court and wait at the king's own table. Then how he was rescued by the people of Bessa, who slew Mitrane, and after that came to Memphis: and thereto he added an account of Thyamis and his fortunes. Last of all he told him of Arsace's love toward Theagenes, and how he was brought to the palace, with the honour which she gave him in token of her good will, and all the service he did as her cup bearer, and how that yet there was no harm done, by reason that the young man withheld her and would not. Marry it was to be doubted by continuance of time or violence he might be forced, if some man did not soon fetch him from Memphis, and so cut away the ground from Arsace's love. And for that cause he had come privily to tell him quickly thereof, since

his love for his master was such that he could not conceal what he knew to be contrary to his pleasure.

When he had angered Oroondates with this tale, so that he was now thoroughly chafed and in mind to be revenged, he kindled in him a new desire by talking of Chariclea, commanding her highly and praising her beauty, as she well deserved, saying that there never was seen such a one before nor would be after. ‘Account all your concubines,’ quoth he, ‘not only those that are at Memphis but those also who follow you here, not to be worth a rush in comparison with her.’ He told him also many other things, trusting that, although Oroondates had to do with Chariclea, he might himself after a while ask for her as the price of his information, and take her for wife. By this time the governor was all on fire, being caught in the snares both of anger and desire, so that without delay he called for Bagoas, one of his most trusty eunuchs, and giving him fifty horsemen sent him to Memphis, with command to bring to him quickly Theagenes and Chariclea, wherever he might find them. He wrote a letter also to Arsace, in this manner :

Oroondates to Arsace

‘Send the prisoners Theagenes and Chariclea, brother and sister being the king’s slaves, to me to be conveyed to the king : and send them willingly ; for whether you wish it or not, they shall be taken from you and credit given to Achaemenes.’

To Euphrates his chief eunuch at Memphis he wrote thus : ‘Of the negligent ordering of my house you shall hereafter give account. At this time deliver to Bagoas the two Greek prisoners, whether Arsace be willing or not. Let them be delivered without fail ;

else know that I have commanded to bring thee also in bonds to be flayed alive.' Bagoas then set off to do his commands, having the letter sealed with the governor's own signet, that those at Memphis should the better credit them and deliver to him the young folks. Oroondates himself went to his war against the Ethiopians, ordering that Achaemenes should follow with him also, and be kept secretly under guard until his information was proved true.

About this same time the following matters happened at Memphis. Just after Achaemenes had gone Thyamis, being now high priest and therefore chief of the city, when he had performed whatever pertained to the burial of Calasiris within the appointed days, remembered to make inquiry after Theagenes and Chariclea, since it was now lawful for the priests by their own ordinance to deal with strangers. Making diligent search for them everywhere, he heard at length that they were lodged in the prince's court. Wherefore he went to Arsace in haste and asked for them, saying that for many reasons they appertained to him, but especially for that his father Calasiris with the last words he spake commanded him to provide for their welfare and defend them from wrong. He thanked her for entertaining the young Greek strangers so courteously during the days when it was not lawful for any but priests to lodge in the temple; but marry now he desired to have them who had been entrusted to himself again. To this Arsace made answer: 'I marvel at you, that while with your own mouth you commend us for our humanity and gentleness, you condemn us straightway again of incivility, making it appear that either we cannot or we will not provide for strangers and do for them as reason requires.' 'I mean not so,' said Thyamis,

' for I know that they would fare better here with you than at my house, if they wished to stay. But seeing that they are of good parentage, and have been diversely tormented by fortune, and for the moment are far from their native country, they care for nothing so much as to recover their friends and get home again. Wherein that I should help them my father left me his heir, and I have besides other causes of amity with them.' ' You do well,' quoth Arsace, ' to leave brawling and to plead equity : which appears so much the more on our side, as in matters of ownership possession as master is a stronger thing than vain intentions.' Thyamis wondered at this and said : ' Have you mastership over them ? How I pray you ? ' ' By martial law,' quoth she, ' which maketh of prisoners bond slaves.'

Then Thyamis perceived that she spake of the business with Mitrane, and said : ' There is no war, Arsace, but peace at this time ; and although the one bringeth into bondage, yet the other maketh free. The one is a tyrant's will, the other a monarch's decree. In a word, war and peace ought not to be regarded by their names, but by the meaning and intent of those that use them. Wherefore you will make a better definition of equity if you consent to this. As for what is honest and profitable there can be no question. For how is it seemly for you, or profitable, to appear so madly set on keeping these young strangers ? ' At that Arsace could contain herself no longer ; and that happened to her which is common to all lovers. So long as they think they are not spied, they blush ; but when once they are perceived, they are past all shame. The secret lover hesitates ; he that is detected becomes the more bold.

Since then her guilty mind accused her and she thought that Thyamis suspected somewhat, she set not a rush by the priest nor by the honour of his office, but elbowing aside all womanly shame she said : ‘ You shall not go unpunished, you people, for what you did to Mitrances. In due season Oroöndates will take vengeance on those that slew him and his company. As for these strangers, I will not let them go. For the moment they are my slaves, and within a short space they will be sent according to Persian custom to my brother the great king. Wherefore play the orator as long as you list, and lose your labour with defining of justice, and honour, and utility. He who hath dominion over another needeth none of these, but measureth each according to his own wish. Begone from our court straightway, and that willingly, lest, if you care not, you be forced to depart in your despite.’

So Thyamis went away, calling the gods to witness and saying only that this would not come to a good end, but meaning already to tell his story to the city and ask the people’s aid. But Arsace said : ‘ I care not for your priesthood : love’s one holy office is happiness.’ And therewith she went to her chamber, and sending for Cybele devised what they had to do. For by this time she began to suspect that Achaemenes was gone to Oroöndates, because he came not into sight. If at any time she asked for him, Cybele made diverse and sundry excuses, to persuade her anything rather than that he was gone to Oroöndates : but for all that she was not believed, and as time went on lost her credit quite. On this occasion then Arsace said : ‘ What shall we do now, Cybele ? What way can we devise to rid me out of all these perils that I am in ? My love abateth no whit, but rather waxeth

fiercer and fiercer, finding fresh fuel in the young man. But he is cruel, and will not be ruled, and was more gentle even before than he is now ; for then he comforted me with deceitful promises, but now he openly refuses to do my request. I am the more grieved for fear lest, as I suspect, he too has heard of Achaemenes, and therefore is more afraid than ever of the act. And in addition to all this there is the vexation of Achaemenes, who is gone with information to Oroondates, and is likely either to persuade him or at least to find him not altogether incredulous. But let me only see Oroondates ; I know he will not be able to withstand my flattery and one tear from Arsace's eyes. For a wife's caresses and familiar looks have a wonderful charm to persuade her husband. But what grieveth me most is if haply I be accused, yea and punished even, if Oroondates believes the charge before I see him, ere I have had my way with Thengenes. Wherefore, Cybele, turn every stone, devise every manner of means now, seeing that we are brought to our final extremity. And remember that if I despair myself I shall not spare others, and you shall be the first to taste the fruits of your son's attempts ; whereof that thou art ignorant I cannot surmise.' 'As touching my son,' said Cybele, 'and my fidelity to you, mistress, you will know in the end that you are deceived. That you so slackly handle your own love is no just reason why you should blame others who are blameless. You do not command the stripling like a mistress but flatter him like a servant. That perhaps was well enough at the first, when we deemed him to be of a weak and tender spirit ; but now when he withstands his lover so stiffly, let him by experience learn that you are his mistress, and be glad after whips and torments to yield to your pleasure. For young

men pay no heed to prayers, but when they are forced then begin they to stoop. Wherefore this one also, when he is chastised, will do that which he would not while he was flattered.' ' You seem to speak well' said Arsace, ' but how could I abide to see with mine own eyes his body scourged or otherwise tormented ? ' ' You are too pitiful,' said Cybele ; ' it rests with him : a little pain will make him better advised, and you after a little grief will have all you desire. You need not vex your own eyes with what shall be done to him. Deliver him to Euphrates, and command him to punish him as it were for some other offence, so that you shall not see that which would pain you—for hearing is nothing so grievous as sight—and then, if we perceive that he has changed his mind, we may on his sufficient repentance release him from his pain.'

Arsace allowed herself to be persuaded—for love when in despair has no mercy on the beloved and is ever wont to take vengeance for a repulse—and sending for the chief eunuch commanded him to do as they had devised. He, being afflicted with jealousy as are all eunuchs, and offended with Theagenes besides because of other things that he saw and surmised, laid him at once in irons, and locking him in a dark room tormented him with hunger and stripes. When Theagenes, who knew the reason well enough but pretended to be ignorant, asked why he was thus handled, he gave him no answer ; but every day augmented his pains and tormented him more than either Arsace wished or had commanded, never suffering any man to go in to him save Cybele : for so was he ordered. She came to him very often, pretending she brought him food privily, as being very sorry for his mishap because of their past acquain-

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

tance, but in truth trying him, to see if he relented a whit because of these pains, and how he was presently minded. But he played the man then all the more and withstood every trial, suffering his body to be afflicted, but keeping a lofty stomach by reason of his chastity. As for his ill fortune, he rejoiced therein, because though his greatest part was tormented, yet his best and most noble part was well pleased, since he had occasion now to show his love and faithfulness to Chariclea. He thought indeed that it went very well with him if only she might know thereof, and ever called upon her as his light and his life. Cybele seeing this, when, contrary to Arsace's mind—which was that he should be punished a little, until he relented, and not tormented to death—she had brought Euphrates word to augment his punishment, began now to realise that her attempt had been useless and of no effect, and to understand in what danger she herself was. Sometimes she was afraid of the instant vengeance of Oroöndates, if Achaemenes should have told him hereof; sometimes she feared lest Arsace even before that should have her killed, as having been beguiled of the attainment of her love. She determined therefore to brave all risks, and by some surpassing stroke of mischief execute Arsace's pleasure and so avoid her present peril, or else to do away with every proof by killing of them all. In that mind she went to Arsace and said: ‘Mistress, we lose our labour. That obstinate fellow relenteth no whit, but is more wilful, and hath Chariclea always in his mouth, and comforteth himself with her name, as if it were the dearest thing in the world to him. Wherefore if it please you, let us cast our last anchor, as the proverb says, and make away with her who stands so in our way. For if he shall know that she

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

is dead, it is likely that he will change his mind and do our pleasure, being out of all hope of her love.'

Arsace snatched at her words—for her old jealousy was now by anger increased—and said: ‘ You give me good counsel: I will see to it and give command that the mischievous wench be removed.’ ‘ Who will do your commandment in this point?’ said Cybele. ‘ For although you have all things in your hands, yet the laws will not let you kill any one without the judgment of the Persian magistrates. You will have need, at your own great trouble and annoyance, to invent a charge against the maid; and then it is doubtful whether we shall be able to prove it. But if you think good—for I am ready to do anything for your sake—I will dispatch this matter with poison, and by means of a subtle cup rid our adversary of her life.’ Arsace approved the plan and bade her put into practise; and she went about it forthwith. She found Chariclea moaning and weeping and thinking of naught but how to devise some way of death—for by this time she suspected in what case Theagenes was, although at first Cybele had by diverse tricks deluded her and made sundry excuses for that she saw him not in the parlour as she was wont to do—and said to her: ‘ Good soul, wilt thou not cease thus to vex thyself and pine away to no purpose? Behold, Theagenes will be set at liberty this night and come to thee. Our mistress, who was somewhat angered with him because of a certain offence that he committed in serving her and commanded him to be kept in ward, hath promised this day—partly at my request—to set him at liberty and to celebrate a sumptuous feast according to the custom of this country. Wherefore arise and be merry

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL.

and now at length eat somewhat with us.' 'How can I believe you?' said Chariclea. 'Your continual lying hath so often beguiled me that I cannot give credit to anything that you say.' Then said Cybele: 'I swear unto you by all the gods that your business shall be dispatched this day and you will never need to trouble hereafter; provided only you do not kill yourself before by refraining these many days from food. Wherefore eat some bit of that which is provided at this time.' Chariclea with much ado consented, although she doubted that she would deceive her as she had done many times before; but partly because of her oath she agreed and partly she was glad to embrace the pleasure that she promised: for the mind doth quickly give credit to that which it earnestly desireth. So they sat down together and did eat. As the waiting maid served them to drink Cybele beckoned to her to bring Chariclea the first cup, and then she herself drank of another. But scarcely had she drank it off when she began to grow dizzy and spilling what was left on the ground and looking fiercely at the maid was torn with violent retchings and convulsions.

Chariclea was terror stricken with dismay and tried to help her; and so were all the rest that were there. For the poison, it appeared, was swifter than an arrow in its force and strong enough to kill at once even a young and lusty man, while in her old dry body it made its way to the vital parts sooner than any one could tell the tale. Thus was the old woman consumed, and when the spasms were ended her limbs fell motionless, and all her body turned very black. But methinks her crafty mind was more mischievous even than the poison; for even as she was yielding up her ghost she forgot not her subtle devices, but partly

by signs and partly by broken words and dying speech she signified that it was Chariclea who had poisoned her. So the old woman died, and Chariclea was bound and brought straightway to Arsace, who asked her whether she had provided the poison, and threatened to torment her on the rack if she would not confess the truth. Then was Chariclea a strange sight to those who looked upon her. She was not sad nor bare any countenance that might argue a faint heart, but came forward smiling and made no account of what she had in hand : either because she heeded not the slander as being guiltless, or else that if Theagenes were not alive, she wished also to die and thought it a gain to take upon her a deed which others had done. ‘ Jolly dame,’ said she, ‘ if Theagenes be alive, say that I am not guilty of this murder. But if he have miscarried through thy mischievous attempts, thou shalt need no torments to make me confess. I am she who killed thy nurse that brought thee up so well and taught thee so much good. Take me and kill me out of hand : for I could do Theagenes no greater pleasure, who by good right hath resisted thy wicked devices.’

These words made Arsace mad, and when she had commanded her to be beaten she said : ‘ Carry this quean away, bound as she is, and show her to her goodly lover, who is in like plight, and when you have bound her hand and foot commit her to Euphrates also to be kept until to-morrow, that she may be condemned to death by the Persian magistrates.’ As she was led away, the maid who was Cybele’s cup-bearer—she was one of the two Ionians, who at first were given by Arsace to wait upon the young folks—either for good will to Chariclea by reason of their acquaintance and familiarity, or else

moved by the will of God, wept and lamented pitifully and said : ‘ O unhappy woman that is without all fault.’ They who were by wondered at her and compelled her to tell plainly what she meant. Then she confessed that she herself gave Cybele that poison, having received it before from her to give it to Chariclea. Troubled by the strangeness of the matter, or else called hastily by Cybele, who bade her bring the first draught to Chariclea, she had changed the cups and given the old woman that wherein the poison was. So she was carried forthwith to Arsace, all men deeming it a happy issue that Chariclea should be found free of guilt ; for even barbarous folk have pity upon a gentle and noble countenance. But though the maid said the same to her, yet she prevailed nothing, but Arsace commanded her also, as helping and consenting to the deed, to be put in prison and kept for judgment.

The Persian magistrates, in whose hands it was to determine controversies and punish offences against the common weal, were sent for in haste to sit in judgment the next day. When they were come Arsace accused Chariclea of poisoning her nurse, declaring all that had happened, and oft would moist her words with tears, because she was despoiled of her whom she counted most dear and above all others loved her best. She took moreover the judges to witness how she had entertained Chariclea, being a stranger, and showed her all manner of courtesy, and was now thus wronged instead of thanks which she had well deserved. To be short, Arsace laid sore charges against her ; but Chariclea made no answer, but confessed the fact again, and said that she gave her the poison, and moreover she added that she would have poisoned Arsace also, if she had not been prevented, and many

other things else, railing openly against her and inviting the judges to deliver sentence of punishment. For she had been the night past with Theagenes in prison, and conferring with him of their affairs in turn she had concluded that, if need were, she would willingly die any manner of death whereto she should be condemned, and depart out of a life full of troubles and endless wanderings and cruel fortune. Then she had given him his last farewell belike in loving fashion, and taken the jewels that were exposed with her, which she was ever wont of purpose to bear privily upon her, and tied them about her body, underneath, to the intent that they should furnish her burial, and now confessed every accusation that was laid against her and refused no manner of death and rehearsed herself many things of which she was not even accused. Wherefore the judges made no delay but had almost adjudged her to a more cruel and Persian-like death ; yet, because they were moved somewhat by her countenance and young surpassing beauty, they condemned her presently to be burned with fire.

Then was she led away by the executioners and carried a little without the walls, the herald proclaiming that she was to be burned as a prisoner, and a great company following forth from the city. Some saw her as she was being led away, others heard thereof by report, which quickly flew over all the town, and so hastened. Arsace came also and looked on from the wall ; for she thought it a pain, if she satisfied not herself by seeing her die. When the executioners had laid a great deal of wood together, and put fire thereto, so that now it began to flame, Chariclea prayed those who led her to give her a little leave, promising that she would go into the fire alone. Which granted,

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

she lifted up her hands to heaven where the sun sent forth his rays, and cried with a loud voice : ‘ O sun and earth, and all ye blessed spirits upon the earth and under the earth, who see and take vengeance on all workers of wickedness, be witness that I am not guilty of that whereof I am accused. Vouchsafe to take me gently into your care, for I am willing to die because of the intolerable griefs that burden me. And hasten to take vengeance on this shameless Arsace, who hath defiled herself with so many filthy acts, and is a harlot, and doth all this to rob me of my husband.’ When she had said this, all cried out at her words : some would have the execution stayed till another time of judgment, some were ready to take her away now : but she, preventing them all went into the midst of the fire.

She stood there a good while without harm and the fire went every way about her, but approached not near to do any hurt, giving place rather when she came thereinto, so that by reason of the light around her her beauty was made the fairer and more wonderful, seeming like to a bride married in a chamber of fire. She went sometimes into this side and sometimes into that, marvelling what it meant and hastening to die ; but it prevailed not, for the fire always gave way and fled as it were from her. The tormentors for their part ceased not to lay on wood and reeds —Arsace with threatening nods charging them so to do—to make it burn more fiercely : but it did no good, save that it troubled the people more, who supposing that she had help from heaven cried : ‘ The woman is clean, the woman is not guilty’ and coming to the fire put the tormentors aside. The first that so did was Thyamis—for by this time he was come, being admonished of what was done by the great noise in

the city—who encouraged the people to help her. They were fain to deliver her but durst not come near the fire, bidding her step out herself, for she that had been in the fire without harm need fear nothing if she list to come forth. Which when Chariclea saw and heard, thinking that God had preserved her, she deemed it best not to be ungrateful nor make light of his benefit, and leapt out of the fire. Whereat the people for joy and wonder gave a great shout and thanked the gods. But Arsace, not well in her wits, skipped from the walls and came out at a postern with a great company of her guard and other noble men of Persia, and laid hands herself upon Chariclea, and looking frowardly upon the people said : ‘ Are you not ashamed to go about to deliver a graceless woman, a witch and a murderer, taken in the deed doing and confessing the same. In so helping such a wicked quean, you strive against the Laws of Persia and against the king himself, his governors, nobles and judges. Perhaps you be deceived, because she burned not this day, and ascribe that help to the gods. Will you not be wiser and understand that this is a great proof of her witchcraft, who hath such store of sleights that she can withstand the might of fire ? Come you to-morrow into the counsel house, if you will, for it shall be open and public to all ; and there you shall hear her confess and be convicted also by those who were privy to her crime, that I now keep in prison.

Therewithal she carried her away, holding her by the neck, and commanded her guard to make room. Some of the people were angry and in mind to resist ; others gave way because they were somewhat blinded by the tale of poisoning ; but most had fear of Arsace and her authority. So Chariclea was delivered to

Euphrates again, to be kept for another judgment, and had more irons laid upon her. The greatest comfort that she had in this adversity was that she had time to tell Theagenes of her affairs. For this was Arsace's invention too, to put them to more pain, thinking that the young people being prisoners together might behold each other's torments and griefs : since she knew that a lover is more distressed by his friend's pain than by his own. But this was to them a comfort, and they thought it gain to be afflicted alike, and if either had less torment than the other, each supposed himself vanquished and as it were more weak in love. Moreover they were together, and could encourage one another to bear in manly fashion whatsoever fortune came, and refuse no trial that might ensue of their unfeigned chastity and steadfast faith. After they had talked far into the night of such matters as it is likely they would—for they never hoped to talk together again—and had satisfied themselves as well as they might, they at last fell into communication of the miracle which happened about the fire. Theagenes referred the benefit thereof to God's goodness who had saved her, being guiltless, from Arsace's unjust slander. But Chariclea seemed to doubt. 'For,' quoth she, 'this strange kind of delivery may be thought indeed to proceed from God. But to be afflicted with these our miseries and torments beyond measure is rather a sign of those who are plagued by God and suffer from his displeasure. Unless indeed this be a divine mystery, where God casts men into extreme peril, and when all hope is past finds a remedy.'

When she had said this, and Theagenes bade her be content and to cling to godly thoughts even more

than to chastity, suddenly she cried : ‘ The gods be favourable to us ! Now I remember what a dream or waking vision I had this last night, although, I know not how, I had forgotten it before. It was a line of verse and noble Calasiris expounded it to me, either appearing to me in my sleep or else manifestly seen. The meaning whereof was this.

‘ *By virtue of Pantarbe let fear
Of fire removed be
An easy thing for Parcae 'tis,
Though else right strange to see.*’

Theagenes, when he heard this, himself also was moved like those who have some divine spirit, and gave as great a leap as his chains would let him, and said : ‘ Be kind to us, ye gods. I also am made a poet now, and remember an oracle which some like spirit gave me, whether it was Calasiris or some god appearing in Calasiris’ shape, who seemed to say thus to me.

‘ *To-morrow shalt thou with the maid
Escape Arsace's band,
And soon be brought with her into
The Æthiopian land.*’

As for me, I can guess whereto this oracle tendeth. The ‘ *Land of Ethiopia*’ seemeth to be that which is under the ground. ‘ *With the Maid*,’ that is, to dwell with Proserpine : and the escape from Arsace’s band signifies the departure of the soul from the body. But what should your verse mean, wherein are so many contraries ? for ‘ *Pantarbe*’ means ‘ all fearful ;’ and yet it bids you not be afraid of the fire.’ Then said Chariclea : ‘ My dear heart Theagenes, our long acquaintance with calamity maketh thee to take all things for the worse. For men commonly suit their

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

thoughts to those things that befall them. I think that thy oracle doth foreshadow better luck than you suppose. Perhaps I am the maid, with whom it promises that, after you be delivered from Arsace's chains, you shall journey to my country of Ethiopia. How this shall be done we know not ; but it is neither incredible nor impossible for the gods to do ; those who have given us these oracles will see thereto. 'As touching that which was foretold of me, it is fulfilled, as you yourself know ; and I for whom there seemed no hope am still alive. I carried my safety upon me, although then I knew it not ; but now, methinks, I understand. For whereas at all times before I carried with me the tokens that my mother laid forth with me, at that time above all others, looking for my last judgment I tied them about my body in a secret place, that if I were saved they might find me such things as were necessary for me to live by, but if I miscarried that they might be my last ornaments and furniture for my burial. Among these, Theagenes, which are jewels of great value and very precious stones of India and Ethiopia, there is a ring which my father gave my mother when he was ensured to her, wherein is set a stone called Pantarbe, and about it are certain holy letters written. To be short, that ring hath some heavenly virtue in it which withstandeth fire, giving them that have it grace never to be hurt thereby : which perhaps by the will of the gods hath also preserved me. This may I think and know, because good Calasiris told me the same was written on that band which was then exposed with me and is now wrapped around my body.' 'That is probable and like to be true,' said Theagenes, 'because of your escape. But what second Pantarbe shall we have to help us out of to-morrow's danger ? It doth not

promise immortality because of its avoidance of the fire—I would to God it might—and the most wicked Arsace methinks is now devising some new fashion of vengeance against us. I would that she might condemn us both at once to one kind of death; for verily I should not call that death but a rest from all our troubles.' 'Be of good comfort,' quoth Chariclea; 'we have another Pantarbe, even the promise that was made us this night. Let us trust to God, and then we shall either have the more pleasure if we be saved, or die with better minds if need require.' Thus were they occupied, sometimes lamenting and weeping, more for the other's than their own fortune, sometimes taking their last leave and swearing by the gods and their present trouble that they would hold their faith in love inviolable to the death.

Meanwhile Bagoas and the fifty horsemen who were sent with him came to Memphis late in the night, when all were asleep, and waking the guard at the gate, and telling them who they were, and being recognised went quietly in haste to the governor's palace. There Bagoas left his horsemen, inclosing the house with them round about, that they might be ready to help if any man withheld him. He himself went by a certain postern, of which the most knew not and having with small ado broken down a slender door and told him that abode there who he was, and commanded him to make no noise, he hastened to Euphrates, knowing the way easily by continual use before, while the moon also shone a little. He found him in bed, and wakened him, and as he made a noise and asked who was there, he bade him peace, saying: 'It is I: bid one bring a lamp hither.' Then he called a boy who waited upon him, and bade him bring a lamp and awake no one else. When the boy had

set the lamp in the stand and gone again, Euphrates said : ‘ What news does this sudden and unexpected coming signify ? ’ ‘ I need not use many words,’ answered Bagoas. ‘ Read these letters, and mark this seal, and be sure that it is Oroöndates who gives this charge ; and do his commandment, taking night and quickness as your allies to escape all notice. Whether it is profitable to declare his orders to Arsace you must for yourself consider.’ As soon as Euphrates had read both the letters, he said : ‘ Arsace will in any case be ill content ; but for the moment she is in great peril, since she lies now in a fever which I think the gods sent upon her yesterday. She is in a burning heat, so that we have small hope of her life. I would not deliver this letter to her, even if she were hale and well, for she would rather die herself, and kill us all too, than deliver up these young folks. Know that you have come in due time, and take them with you, and help them all you may. Have pity upon them, for they deserve pity in their troubles, and have been afflicted a thousand ways, sore against my will ; but Arsace gave command. Marry they are of good stock, and as I have found by experience very modest in all points.’

So he led him to the prison. Bagoas when he saw the young prisoners, though they were pined away with torments, wondered at their tall stature and excellent beauty. They were somewhat dismayed, thinking that this was what they expected, and that Bagoas had come at dead of night to give them their last and deadly judgment. But they soon took heart, and looked cheerfully as though they cared for nothing, and gave those who were there manifest tokens that they were glad. When Euphrates came near and set his hands to take away the stocks where-

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

unto their chains were tied, Theagenes cried out : ' O goodly Arsace, she thinketh to hide her mischievous deeds of wickedness in the darkness of night. But the eye of justice is quick to reprove and brings to light all wicked acts, be they never so closely and privily done. Do you as you are commanded, and whether it be fire water or sword that be appointed for us, let us both together and at one time have the same manner of death.' Chariclea made the like petition also. Whereat the eunuchs wept—for they partly understood what they said—and brought them forth chains and all.

When they were out of the governor's house Euphrates tarried behind and Bagoas, with the horsemen that came with him, took off most of the irons, leaving no more but so many as might keep them safely and not annoy them. Then, setting them on horses and putting them in their midst, they went as fast as they could to Thebes. They rode all the night and until the third hour of the next day without alighting, and then not able to abide the heat of the sun—for it was the summer season in Egypt—and exhausted by lack of sleep, but most of all because they saw Chariclea to be weary of riding, they determined to halt a while to ease themselves, and bait their horses, and let the maid rest. There was a little hill upon the bank of the Nile, about the which the water went, not keeping his straight course but turning in a manner half round, so that it made the place like a little island. That which was thus compassed by the water was full of rich grass, by reason that it was so near the river, very good for cattle and horses to feed in ; it was shadowed moreover by trees of Persia and great fig trees and such others as do commonly grow about the Nile. There Bagoas with his company

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

alighted, using the trees instead of a tent, and did eat meat himself and offered Theagenes and Chariclea some too. At first they would not, saying that it was useless for them to eat who should soon be slain, but he compelled them in a manner, and persuaded them that no such thing was meant, but that they were being taken to Oroöndates, and not to be killed.

When the heat of the day was past and the sun shone on their side out of the west and Bagoas was making ready to ride again, there came one on horseback, who for the haste that he had made panted himself and his horse had sweat so much that he could scarcely sit upon him. He said somewhat to Bagoas privily, and then stood still. Bagoas for a little while held down his head, seeming to muse at that which was told him, and afterwards said : ‘ Strangers, be of good cheer : you are revenged of your enemy : Arsace is dead. When she heard that you were gone, she hanged herself, by her own will preventing the death that must necessarily have ensued for her. For she could not have escaped from Oroöndates and the king without punishment, but either she would have been put to death or else continually shamed for all the rest of her life. Such word doth Euphrates send by this messenger. Wherefore be merry ; for I know well that you have hurt no body, and she that hurt you is dead.’ Thus said Bagoas to them, not speaking Greek very well and letting many false phrases escape him ; but still he told them, partly because he was glad himself, in that he was scarce content with Arsace’s frowardness, who while she lived played the tyrant, partly because he wished to cheer and comfort the young folks. For he hoped—and indeed it was so—that he would be held by Oroöndates in high esteem, if he brought safely to him the young

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

man, whose comeliness would overshadow all the other courtiers, and the maid of such singular beauty to be his wife after Arsace's death. Theagenes too and Chariclea rejoiced at the news and thanked the great gods and justice therefore. For they thought they would fear nothing, though they had never so ill luck seeing that their mortal enemy was dead. So great a pleasure is it even to die, so long as your enemies also are destroyed.

When it drew toward evening and the heat began to abate, so that it was better to travel in, they set forward and rode all that evening and the night and the next morning, making haste to find Oroöndates at Thebes if they might. But they lost their labour. One of the army met them and told them that the governor was no longer at Thebes, and that he himself was sent to get together all soldiers in arms, even those that had been left in garrison, and bring them with speed to Syene. All was in trouble and in hurly-burly, and it was to be feared that the city had already been taken, for the governor was late in moving, and the Ethiopian army used such celerity that it was there before any news came that it was coming.

At this Bagoas left his intended journey to Thebes and went to Syene. But when he was almost there he fell in with then Ethiopian scouts, a valiant crew of lusty soldiers, who were sent before to spy out the country that the main army might have safe passage. At that time because of the darkness and their ignorance of the country they had strayed too far away, and having hidden in the reeds by the river to protect themselves and to lay ambush for their enemies they stayed there all night and slept not. Early in the morning when they heard Bagoas and his horsemen ride by and saw that they were but a few, they

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

suffered them to ride on, and when they knew certainly that none followed them, they broke out with a great noise and pursued them. Bagoas and the horsemen who were with him were startled by the sudden cry, as well for that by their colour they knew them to be Ethiopians, and being themselves not able to withstand their numbers—for there were a thousand of them sent to spy the country in light harness—they tarried not so much as to look them in the faces, but fled : yet not so fast at the first as they might, because they wished not their enemies to think they fled in fear. The others chased them, sending out about two hundred of the people called Troglodytes ; who are a tribe of the Ethiopians who live by husbandry on the borders of Arabia. These Troglodytes are very swift of foot by nature and practise the same from their youth. They never wear heavy armour but use slings in battle and attack their enemies suddenly and so endamage them. If they perceive they be too weak, they flee ; and their enemies never pursue them, for they know they are too swift and will hide themselves in every corner. These people then overtook the horsemen, though they themselves were on foot, and casting with their slings wounded some of them. But when they turned upon them, they would not abide, but fled back little by little to their fellows. Which when the Persians perceived, despising their numbers they chased them as fast as they might, and after driving them back themselves rode forward with as much speed as they could, spurring their horses and giving them the reins at will. By which means some escaped and fled to a turn of the Nile where they hid under the bank as a refuge that their enemies might not see them. But Bagoas was taken prisoner, because his horse stumbled and he fell and hurt his leg

so that he could not stir it. Theagenes also and Chariclea were taken, who thought it shame to forsake Bagoas, whose good will they had tried already and hoped to find more at his hands afterward. They therefore tarried with him, partly because they could not flee, but being also themselves willing to surrender. Then Theagenes said to Chariclea : ‘ Thus is our dream come to pass. These be the Ethiopians into whose land it is our destiny to come as prisoners. It is best to yield and commit ourselves to doubtful fortune with them rather than to certain danger with Oroöndates.’

Chariclea understood that she was led by the hand of destiny and had better hope, supposing those who took them to be friends rather than enemies. Yet she told Theagenes nothing of what she thought, but said only that she was well content. When the Ethiopians came, they knew Bagoas to be an eunuch by his face, but they made inquiry who these should be whom they saw unarmed and in chains, although of excellent beauty and nobleness, calling up an Egyptian of their own company and another who could speak the Persian tongue, thinking that they would understand either both or one of the two. For scouts and foreriders are taught by necessity to have such with them as can speak the language of the inhabitants and their enemies, that they may the better understand that wherefore they are sent. Theagenes, who by continuance of time had learned the Egyptian tongue a little and could answer a short question, told them that Bagoas was the chief servant of the Persian governor and that they themselves were Greeks, taken prisoners first by the Persians, but now through better fortune by the Ethiopians. Thereat they decided to spare their lives, and take them

CHARICLEA'S TRIAL

prisoners, and as their first booty to make a present to their king of the chiefest jewel his Persian enemy had. For in the courts of Persia eunuchs are eyes and ears, and as they have no children nor kinsfolk to whom their minds might be bent, they depend only upon him who trusts them. As for the young folks, they thought they would be a goodly present, to wait upon their king and grace his court. So they set them upon horses and carried them away, because Bagoas being wounded and the others hindered by their chains could not else go fast enough. Surely this was like the prologue to a play. The strangers and prisoners, who just before were afraid of instant death, were now not so much carried off as escorted, with those for guards who soon were to be their subjects. In such case were they.

THE NINTH BOOK

THE GREAT BATTLE

By this time Syene was plainly besieged, inclosed as though with nets by the Ethiopian army. For Oroondates, when he heard that the Ethiopians were at hand and had left the Cataracts to march upon Syene, got into the town a little before them, and closed up the gates, and when he had planted his slings and other ordinance upon the wall, he waited to see what they would do. Hydaspes king of Ethiopia heard from his spies at a distance that the Persians were marching to Syene and pursued them in haste with hope of a battle. But he came too late, and therefore lodged his army round about the city without any skirmish, as though he were sitting at a play, and filled all their level country with countless myriads of men and arms and cattle. There his spies found him and presented their prisoners. He took great pleasure to look upon the young couple, and had good affection to them in his mind, as those that should be afterward his own children, although he knew it not then, but especially he counted it good luck that when they were caught they were already in chains. ‘Good,’ he cried, ‘the gods at the beginning deliver our enemies to us in chains. These are our first prisoners and they shall be kept to the end of the war, to be sacrificed at our triumph to the gods, according to the ancient law of Ethiopia.’ After

THE GREAT BATTLE

rewarding the spies he sent them and the prisoners to the baggage train, setting guards to keep them who could speak their language and giving them command to look well to them, and let them fare of the best, and keep them from all manner of uncleanness, as things appointed for sacrifice should be kept, and also that their fetters should be changed for bands of gold. For where iron serveth in other countries, gold serveth in Ethiopia.

They did as they were commanded, and taking off their former chains put them in comfort that they should live more easily, and fitted for them fetters of gold. Theagenes laughed hereat and said : ‘ Good lord, what means this trim change ? Truly fortune flattereth us who exchange iron for gold and being enriched in prison become, because of our fetters, men of worth.’ Chariclea smiled also, and wishing to turn him to other thoughts reminded him of the god’s oracle, and so put him in better hope. Hydaspes then himself assaulted Syene, expecting with his great host that at the first approach he would overthrow the town, walls and all. But for the moment he was repulsed by the defenders who valiantly withstood their enemies’ force and railed at them insolently to anger them the more. Very wroth that they were resolved to endure to the end and had not straight yielded themselves to him, he determined not to waste time with his army in slow delay, nor yet to try such attacks as would let some escape and some be taken, but by a great and invincible siege utterly in a short space to destroy the town. Wherefore he devised this work.

He divided the circle of the wall into parts and to every ten soldiers he gave ten yards, commanding them to make a ditch very deep and very broad.

Some digged, others carried the grit away, others raised up a counter-wall against that which was besieged. No man because of their great army durst come out of the town to hinder the work and prevent it being made round the town, while their slings and other engines served to no purpose, since Hydaspes had arranged that the space between the two walls was so great that those who made the ditch were out of reach by their missiles. They soon finished the work by reason of the great number of the labourers, and then he began this other thing. He left between the two ends of the trench a space one hundred feet broad which he ditched to the Nile, bringing the same ever from the lower ground to that which was more high. A man might have likened the work to a long wall, because it kept always a hundred feet in breadth ; and was as long as the space between Syene and the Nile. When he had brought this ditch to the banks of the Nile he let in to it the water from the river, which in falling from a higher place into a lower and out of the wonderful breadth of the Nile into a narrow trench wrought by hand made a great noise, both at the entry thereto and also in the ditch, so that they might hear it who were a great way off. Which when those who were in Syene saw and understood into what danger they were brought, because he meant by so compassing them about to drown their town so that none might escape, being inclosed both by the wall and the water ; knowing that there was no safety in waiting they made good shift, as far as time allowed, to help themselves. First they caulked the chinks in the gates with tow and pitch, and then they underpinned the walls to make them stronger. Some brought earth, some stones, some timber, and anything that each had to hand. No man rested, but

THE GREAT BATTLE

women, children, and even old men laboured hard ; for danger of death refuses the help neither of any age or of any kind. The sturdier youths and the men at arms were set to make a countermine that should reach to the enemies earth work, the manner whereof was thus. They digged a pit first about five yards right down close to the wall and there laid a sure foundation. Then they digged forward, straight to the enemies wall, by torchlight, those behind carrying away the earth dug by those before, and heaping it in that part of the city when their gardens were. And this they did, that if the water came into that place which was without earth it might have a path to break out and run away. But the danger came too quickly upon them despite their efforts. The Nile rushed down the long trench, fell very fast into the round ditch, and then flowing everywhere over the banks drowned all the space between the two walls and made it like a marsh. And thus was Syene made an island, and a city which stands in mid country was compassed about with water and beaten upon by the waves of Nile. The wall of the town withstood the force of the water for one day. But as the water increased and rose high, and sinking through the cracks, which the heat of summer had made in the rich black ground, began to work down and reach the foundations, then the masonry above began to shake and seemed as though it would fall. Wherever the loose ground slipped away the wall tottered and threatened to come down, while the battlements trembled and by their shaking disturbed those that kept guard nearby.

At last, as evening came on, a part of the wall between two towers fell down, not so that the fallen part was beneath the level of the water to let the flood come in, but yet only standing a few feet above

and threatening an instant deluge. Wherefore there arose a pitiful cry from all manner of folk that were in the city for the enemy to hear, who lifted up their hands to heaven and called to the gods for help, which was all their hope that was left, and humbly besought Oroöndates to send messengers to Hydaspes to ask for peace. He agreed thereto, being now made even against his will the servant of fortune ; but how he should send to his enemies, thus surrounded by water, he knew not, until necessity taught him. For when he had written what he wanted and tied the letter to a stone, he cast the same with a sling instead of a messenger to his enemies, and by this means sent his humble prayers over the waves. But he lost his labour, since the strength of the sling could not overreach that space, but fell before into the water. He cast again in the same fashion and again failed, as did all his archers and slingers, although they were zealous to surpass each the other and were shooting for their lives. At length they held up their hands to their enemies, who stood upon their mound and made a spectacle of their trouble, declaring by signs as well as they could what these throws meant. Sometimes they stretched out their hands with palms upturned, like suppliants ; sometimes they put them behind their backs, in token that they were ready to receive chains and become their bondmen. Hydaspes perceived that they craved mercy and was himself ready to grant it ; for an enemy who yields forces a good man to be generous. But as he had no ready way thereto at that moment, he determined to test them more certainly. He had certain boats ready belonging to the river folk, which he had arranged should come down his trench from the Nile, and had then hauled them up by the circular ditch. He

THE GREAT BATTLE

choose ten of the newest of these, and furnishing them with archers and men-at-arms, he told them what to say and sent them to the Persians, equipped with their weapons and ready to fight if those in the town attempted anything that they looked not for. Truly this was a strange sight, that a ship should sail from wall to wall, and a mariner practise his skill in the midst of dry land, and a boat be rowed where the plough was wont to work. And although the art of war ever deviseth novelties, yet then invented it the strangest thing of all, when it made men in ships fight against them that stood upon walls, and joined two armies by sea and land together. The people on the walls, seeing boats full of armed men approaching that part of the wall that was fallen down, being themselves full of terror and dismay because of their present danger, suspected those who came to bring them safety—for in extremity everything is a cause of suspicion and of fear—and so began to cast stones and shoot arrows against the men in the boats. In such fashion men deal when they are in despair, accounting everything a gain that delays death. Marry in their aiming they so directed their hands as not to wound them but only prevent them to land. The Ethiopians also shot, but more certainly, as they understood not the Persians' mind, and killed two or three of them at once, since being grievously wounded they fell off the walls headlong into the water. The fight would have become more fierce, while the one side spared and did but try to hinder, and the Ethiopians very angrily resisted, if a certain old gentleman of Syene had not come and spoken thus to them on the walls: ‘O mad men, infatuated by your fear, why do we now keep those off, whom we humbly prayed to help us before, when contrary to

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

all expectations they have come ? If they are friends and bring us peace, then they are our saviours : but if they mean to deal like enemies, they may easily be overcome when they have landed. And what shall we be the better when we have slain them, seeing that so black a cloud hangeth over our heads both by water and by land ? Why do we not rather let them come in and see what they have to say ? ' Every man thought that he said well, and the governor also commended him. Wherefore moving this way and that from the fallen part of the wall they stood still and laid down their arms.

When the space between the towers was without defenders, and the people gave them a signal with a banner that they might land, the Ethiopians drew near, and from the platform of their boats, as it were, addressed their besieged audience : ' Ye Persians and men of Syene that be here, Hydaspes king of the east and west Ethiopians, and at this time your king also, knoweth how to overcome his enemies and is also by nature inclined to grant mercy to such as humbly ask it, judging that victory is the work of his soldiers' valorous arms but that mercy is the sign of his own compassionate spirit. So, although he holds your lives in his hand, to grant or to take away, yet now, since you have humbled yourselves, he delivers you from the known and certain penalty of defeat and allows you to decide at your own pleasure what terms of peace you will. For he is not minded to play the tyrant in this case, but doth so govern man's estate as to be free from envy hereafter.' The people of Syene made answer that they committed themselves, their children, and their wives to him, to do with them as he thought good, and if they might live they would render up their city also, which now

was in a desperate case and utterly ruined unless the gods and Hydaspes should prevent its fall. Oroöndates for his part declared that he would give up all that for which the war began, and would let him have the city of Phylae and the emerald mines : but he made request that he would not deal hardly with him, nor require himself and his army to surrender. If Hydaspes would keep all the points of courtesy, let him allow him and his soldiers to depart quietly to Elephantina, doing no damage nor raising further strife. Else he had as lief die now as to live any longer and be condemned by the king for betraying his army. Perhaps indeed that would be worse : for now he would have but a simple and usual death ; then he would haply have new torments devised for him.

When he had said thus he desired them to take on their boats two of his Persians, under pretence that they should go to Elephantina : and if those in that town would yield, he would do the like without further delay. With this answer the legates departed, taking the two Persians with them, and recounted to Hydaspes how they had sped. He smiled a little and blamed Oroöndates much for his folly, that he, being a man not in his own power but another's, either to live or die, should argue about conditions. ' Yet it were foolishly done,' said he, ' to destroy so great a number because of one man's madness ' : and so he let those depart to Elephantina whom Oroöndates sent, as though he cared not if they made what provision they could to withstand him. Of his own men he appointed some to make a dam where the Nile entered his trench, and others to cut openings in their earthworks, that so, if no more water came in and the swamp was gradually drained, the ground by Syene might get dry and hard enough to walk upon.

Those that were thus commanded began a little of the work at once, and would have proceeded the next day: but then they could do no more because evening came upon them. Moreover the people in the city also sought all means they could to help themselves, despairing not of the safety that was offered them unlooked for. Some made a mine underneath the ground near to the enemies ditch, guessing the distance, although they could not see, by means of a line wherewith they took the measure. Others stayed up the wall by torch light; which thing they might easily do, because of the stones left when the wall fell inwards. But even when they had done all they could and thought themselves in safety, they were not free from alarms. About midnight a part of the enemies' mound, just where the Ethiopians that evening had begun to dig through, gave way with a sudden crash. Either it was that the ground had been loosely heaped and was not thick enough, so that the foundation gave way when it was thoroughly wetted. Or else those who were digging the mine caused the lower earth to fall in and slip towards the empty space they made. Or else it was where the Ethiopians had began and after they had ceased for the night the water ran in and once it had broken its way through grew deeper and deeper. Or one may judge it to be the providence of God. Whatever the cause may be, the noise was so great and terrifying that both the Ethiopians and the Syenians thought that the greater part of the walls was fallen down. They who were in the tents kept themselves close, thinking that they were safe for the moment and would know in the morning what it was. But the citizens went round about their walls, and seeing that all was well there thought that their enemies had

THE GREAT BATTLE

had some mishap, until the morning took away all this doubt, and the breach was espied and the water gone. For by this time the Ethiopians were damming up the water channel, lowering wooden flood gates which they secured from outside with heavy baulks of timber, and throwing in baskets of earth and bundles of twigs which thousands of men brought up together either in boats or along the bank of the mound. And thus the water went away at length, although for a long time neither of them could come to the other. For the earth was covered with thick mud, and under that which seemed on the top to be dry there was much wetness, which served as a trap both for men and horses when they came.

Thus they passed the time for two or three days, the people of Syene opening their gates in token of peace and the Ethiopians laying aside their arms. And so, although they could not come together, there was a truce and neither side kept watch and ward. The people in the city gave themselves to pastime and pleasure, for it happened that the Nile-feast, the greatest the Egyptians have, fell then, which is kept holy about Midsummer, at what time the flood increaseth, and is honoured more than all others for this cause. The Egyptians feign the Nile to be a god, and the greatest of all gods, equal to heaven, because he watereth their country, without clouds or rain that cometh from the air, and thus doth he every year just as well as if it should rain. And this is the common folk's opinion. The cause why they give him so divine honour is because they think that the mixture of moist and dry is the special cause of the beginning and continuance of man's life—for the other elements depend on these and are wherever they be—and they deem that moisture proceedeth from the Nile and

dryness from the earth. But this every man knoweth. Marry their divines say that the earth is Isis and the Nile Osiris, giving to either a new name. Therefore the goddess yearns for his company and rejoices when he is with her, but mourns when he is absent, hating Typhon as her enemy. The meaning of this tale their divines, men skilful in natures secrets, do not reveal to the profane but in the form of a fable only instruct them. Those who are desirous to know their privities they instruct within the temples by the bright light of truth.

Let this suffice to be spoken at this time by the grace of God. As for the great secrets let them be honoured by silence, while we proceed orderly with what was done in Syene. When the Nile-feast was come the inhabitants fell to killing of beasts for sacrifice, and though their bodies were busied with their present perils, yet their minds, as much as they might, were godly disposed. But Oroöndates, waiting his time when the Syenians were fast asleep after their feasting, conveyed his army privily out, having secretly given the Persians warning before at what hour and which gate they should go forth. Moreover orders were given to the officers to leave all the horses and cattle behind, that they might not hinder them on the way, or make a noise whereby they should be discovered, but every man was to take his armour and a board or plank under his arm. When they had come together at the gates, as he had ordered, he threw the planks that each man carried across the mud, laying them so that one touched the other, and thus conducted his army over with little pain and great speed, as if there had been a bridge, since those who came after handed their planks to those who went before. When he got to dry land, he went privily

past the Ethiopians, who suspected nothing nor kept watch but slept soundly, and hastened to Elephantina as fast as his breath would give him leave. There he was at once let in ; for the two Persians sent from Syene were waiting for his coming every night, as he had arranged, and when they heard the watchword, threw open the gates.

When it was day the people of Syene discovered their flight, suspecting it first when every man missed the Persian who was lodged in his house, and afterwards gathering together and seeing the bridge they had made before the town. Then was the city in great fear again and looked for grievous punishment for this second wrong, because after they had found such clemency at the Aethiopians' hands they had showed themselves so unfaithful as to let the Persians escape. Wherefore they determined every man to go out of the city, and yield themselves to the Ethiopians, and by oath to confirm their ignorance, if haply they might move them to pity. When all of every age were come together, and had taken boughs in their hands to declare their lowness and humility, and with tapers and torches burning carried all their gods and holy images in token of peace, and were come over that bridge to the Ethiopians, they fell upon their knees and stayed afar off, and gave all at once a sorrowful and lamentable cry, craving in humble fashion the forgiveness of their offence. And to obtain it the more they laid their infants on the ground before them, and suffered them to go whither they would, so assuaging the Ethiopians with their age, which was without suspicion and blame. The children, frightened perhaps by their parents loud cries and knowing nothing of what was done, left those who had brought them forth and reared them and crawled towards the

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

Ethiopians uttering lisping sounds which would have made any man take compassion upon them, as though fortune had suggested to them that they should go as suppliants.

When Hydaspes saw this, he thought that they craved mercy in more earnest fashion even than they did before, and therefore sent to know what they would have, and why they came out alone without the Persians. They told him all : the Persians' flight, their innocence, the high feast of the country, and how they privily slipped away while they were busy in the service of their god and were asleep after the banquet : although perchance being without armour they would not have been able to prevent their armed host even if they had known of their plan. When Hydaspes heard this he suspected, as was the truth, that Oroöndates meant some treachery, and therefore sent for the priests alone, and doing obeisance to the holy images, which they had brought with them to ask for mercy, he questioned them as to whether they could tell him anything of the Persians plans and whither they were gone and wherein was their greatest trust. They answered that they knew nothing certainly : marry they thought that they had gone to Elephantina, where the chief strength of their army lay, and that Oroöndates chief hope was in his mailed cavalry.

When they had said this, they begged him to lay aside his anger against them and to come into their city as though it were his own. But Hydaspes would not come in then, but sent two troupes of armed men to see if there was any suspicion of treachery, and if not to stay as a garrison to defend the city. This done he sent away the people of Syene with gentle promises, and himself went forward with his army, either to

THE GREAT BATTLE

receive the Persians, if they set upon him, or if they tarried, to attack them. He had scarcely set his men in array when his scouts gave him warning that the Persians were coming drawn up for battle. For Oroondates had ordered his main army to assemble at Elephantina and had been compelled to hasten himself to Syene with but a few men when he saw that the Ethiopians, before he expected them, were so near. There being cut off by the enemies' wall, he asked himself for safety, and having obtained it by a promise to Hydaspes then showed himself the most faithless of men. He arranged for two Persians to cross over with the Ethiopians, under pretence that they should learn the mind of the Persians at Elephantina, whether they would choose to make terms with Hydaspes ; but in truth they were to ask whether they were prepared to fight when he himself should be able to slip away. This fraudulent and guileful device he now put into action. For finding them ready he led them forth straightway, and wasted no time in attacking the enemy, putting all his hope in celerity, if he might take him off his guard.

By this time his army could be seen drawn up for battle, taking the eye with its Persian bravery and glistening in silver and gilt armour, as if all the place had been on fire. For the sun just rising shone upon the Persians and gave such a wonderful brightness to their panoplies that it rebounded upon those who were a great way off. On the right wing stood the native Persians and Medes, the men-at-arms in front and the archers who were lightly harnessed behind, that they might shoot the better being defended by them. On the left the Egyptians and Libyans were placed, and slingers and archers with them, and he bade them break out often and assail the side of their

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

enemies' battle. He himself took the centre, sitting in a brave scythed chariot and for safety surrounded by troops of spearmen on either hand, while in front of him were posted the mailed horsemen, upon trust of whom he ventured to join issue with his enemies. For these men are the most valiant of all the Persian fighters and are set before the others as it were an invincible wall.

The manner of their armament is thus. A picked fellow of great strength putteth upon him a close helmet made in one piece fitting as tightly as a mask. This covereth his head down to his shoulders, saving that there be holes left for him to look out of. In his right hand is a great staff, bigger than a spear; with his left hand he holds the horse's reins; by his side hangeth a sword; and all his body is covered with a coat of mail. The mail is made thus. With pieces of brass and iron, as big as the palm of a man's hand, they make a coat, as it were, of scales, laying the end and sides of each piece upon another—so that the nether part of one goeth over the top of the other—and then they sew them together, and this coat lieth upon every part of the body without any ado. It covers every limb, and gives this way and that easily at each movement; for it hath sleeves and reacheth from the neck down to the knees, saving that necessity compels it to be cut between the thighs, that the man may sit upon his horse. Such is their coat of mail, which beateth off all darts and keepeth off all manner of blows. Over their legs to their knees they pull on a boot which is tied to their jacket. They arm their horses also in the same fashion. About his legs they tie greaves and cover his head with a frontal of iron, while from his back down beneath his belly there hangeth a cloth with metal rings which doth both

THE GREAT BATTLE

protect him and by reason of its looseness hindereth not his course at all. Being thus appointed and in a manner forced into his armour the man sitteth upon his horse : marry he leapeth not up himself, but others help him, so encumbered is he with the weight of his arms. When the time of battle comes, he gives his horse the reins and spurs him with his heels and rides upon his enemies at full speed like a man made of iron or a statue fashioned with hammers. His great staff at its pointed end is tied with a cord to the horse's neck and the hinder end is made fast to its buttocks, so that in the conflict it does not yield but helps the horseman's hand, who does but guide the same aright. Thus it gives the greater blow and runs through every man it hits, and often carries away two men together pierced by one stroke.

With such a band of horsemen and the Persian army thus appointed the governor set out against his enemies, keeping the river ever behind him ; for as he was far inferior in numbers to the Ethiopians he planned that the water should be instead of a wall that he might not be surrounded. Hydaspes likewise brought on his army and placed the soldiers of Meroe, who were skilled to fight hand to hand with heavy swords, against the Persians and Medes on the right wing. The Troglodytes and those who come from the country where the cinnamon grows, light harnessed soldiers and cunning archers and very swift of foot, he set against those who were on the enemy's left wing. But against their centre, which he heard was the strongest, he set himself and his elephants with towers on their backs, together with the men-at-arms of the Blemmyes and the Seres, whom he instructed what they should do when they came to fight. When the signal was given for battle, among the Persians by

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

trumpet, with the Ethiopians by drum and timbrel, Oroondates with a shout led on his men to the charge. Hydaspes for his part advanced as slowly as possible step by step, by this means providing that the elephants should not be far from their supports and that the enemies' cavalry in the centre should be weary before they came to blows. When they were within shot, and the Blemmyes saw that the mailed cavalry were calling on their horses for a charge, they did as Hydaspes had commanded. Leaving the Seres to protect the elephants they ran out from the line against the horsemen, so that those who saw them might have thought that they were mad, who being so few durst encounter so many and so well armed. Thereupon the Persians spurred their horses to go faster than before, thinking that the enemy's boldness was their gain and that they would at the first dash overcome them without ado.

But the Blemmyes when they were almost come to hand strokes and in a manner stuck by their spears, suddenly all together fell down and crept under the horses kneeling with one knee upon the ground and sheltering their heads and shoulders beneath, without any harm save that they were trodden a little by their feet. And then they themselves did a strange and unexpected thing. As the horses passed over them they thrust with their swords and wounded them in the belly, so that many of their riders fell, by reason that the horses could not be governed because of their pain and so threw them. Whom, as they lay in heaps, the Blemmyes stabbed under the thighs ; for the Persian horsemen is not able to move unless he has some one to aid him. Those who escaped with their horses whole then charged against the Seres. But they, as soon as they came near, stepped behind the

THE GREAT BATTLE

elephants, as though behind some great tower or hill of refuge. Then there was a great carnage and the horsemen were almost all slain. For their horses, being afraid of the greatness and strange sight of the elephants, thus suddenly revealed, either turned back or ran aside, and caused the main battle to break its array. They who were upon the elephants—six men upon each, two fighting from every side save the behind—shot steadily at the mark from their tower as from a castle, so that the number of their arrows was to the Persians like a cloud. The Ethiopians aimed especially at their enemies eyes, as though they were shooting not for life but to see who were the better archers, and hit their mark so exactly that those who were stricken ran here and there in panic with arrows, as if they had been pipes, piercing their eyes. If any of them against their wills rode out from their ranks, because their horses could not be checked, they fell among the elephants; where they died, being either overthrown and trodden under foot by them or else killed by the Blemmyes and Seres who ran out from behind the elephants as from an ambush, and wounded some with arrows and slew others at close quarters when their horses had cast them to the ground. To be short, those who escaped did nothing worthy of recounting nor hurt the elephants a whit, since the beast is covered with iron when he comes to battle, and if he were not, he hath of nature scales so hard over his body that no spear can enter thereinto.

At last, when all who remained alive were put to flight, the governor with shame enough forsook his chariot and mounting a horse from Nysa fled the battle. The Egyptians and the Libyans who were on the left wing knew nothing thereof, but fought on

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

manfully, though they received many more wounds than they gave ; marry they held out valiantly. For the soldiers of the cinnamon country being set against them pressed them hard and drove them to such shifts that they knew not what to do. If they set upon them, these would flee and running ahead would turn their bows behind them and shoot as they fled. But if they retired, then would they pursue them closely and either with slings or little arrows poisoned with dragon's blood send upon them a swift and grievous death. For in their archery they are more like men at play than at serious work. They wear a round wreath upon their head in which their arrows are set, the feathers turned inwards and the points hanging out like the beams of the sun. In skirmish they take out the arrows therefrom as readily as from a quiver, and leaping and dancing in and out like naked satyrs, they shoot at their enemies. They have no iron heads upon their shafts, but take a bone out of the dragon's back, whereof they make their arrows an ell long. This done, they sharpen it as well as they can and make a self-barb arrow, so called perhaps from the bare bone.

For some time the Egyptians maintained the battle and received the arrows upon their shields, being stubborn by nature and men who boast—not so much profitably as proudly—that they care not for death : and perhaps also they feared punishment if they left their ranks. But when they heard that the horsemen, their chief strength and hope in battle, were put to flight, and the governor gone, and that the much praised soldiers of the Medes and Persians had done no noble feat, but after hurting the men of Meroe a little and being themselves hurt much more had followed after the rest, they also began to leave

THE GREAT BATTLE

fighting and turned in rout. Hydaspes seeing this notable victory from his tower, as from a high hill, sent heralds to them that followed the chase not to kill anyone but to take as many as they could alive, and above all other Oroöndates. Which indeed was done. The Ethiopians drawing their main battles to the left, and extending their deep formation length wise, turned their wings round about and so inclosed the Persian army, leaving them no place to flee but across the river : into the which many fell and were in great danger among the horses and scythed chariots and the turmoil of the multitude. Then they perceived that the policy which the governor had used in the conduct of his army was very foolish and to no purpose ; because at the first, when he feared lest his enemies should surround him and led his army so that the Nile was ever at their backs, he marked not that he left for himself no place whereby he might flee. There was he himself taken prisoner, just when Achaemenes the son of Cybele, who had by this time heard the news from Memphis, went about in the tumult to kill him—for he repented now that he had told anything about Arsace since all his proofs had perished. But Achaemenes, although he stabbed him, dealt not a fatal wound, and himself straightway paid the penalty, being stricken through with an arrow by an Ethiopian, who knew the governor and desired to save him, as command had been given, and was offended that any man in flight from his enemies should shamefully set upon his own fellows and take the opportunity that fortune offered as a time to be revenged upon his private adversary.

Oroöndates then was brought in by him who had taken him prisoner. Hydaspes saw that he was ready to swoon and bleeding sore from his wound, and

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

caused the same to be stayed with incantations by those men who are skilled in that art. Wishing therefore, if he might, to save him and to comfort him with words, he said : ‘ I grant you your life, friend, with all my heart. It is my glory to surpass my enemies, as long as they withstand me, in valour ; but when they are overcome, in generosity. But why were you so false ? ’ ‘ I was false to you,’ said Oroöndates, ‘ but true to my own king.’ Then said Hydaspes : ‘ What punishment think you that you have deserved, seeing that you are overcome ? ’ ‘ Such as my king ought to take,’ quoth he, ‘ from any of your captains that had kept his allegiance to you.’ ‘ Truly,’ said Hydaspes, ‘ he would commend him and send him away highly rewarded, if he be a true king and not a tyrant, and is desirous that his own men seeing the praise given to others may themselves seek to emulate them. But, good sir, although you say you be faithful, will you not confess that you played the fool in venturing so rashly to oppose so many myriads ? ’ ‘ Perhaps I was not foolish,’ answered the other. ‘ I considered my prince’s nature, who doth more punish the cowardly soldier than reward the valiant man. I determined therefore to brave the danger and either win a great and unexpected victory —for in war opportunity is a great magician—or else if I escaped with my life to leave myself a good excuse, in that I had omitted nothing of what I ought to have done.’

When Hydaspes heard him say this, he praised him greatly, and sent him to Syene, and gave his surgeons charge to look well to him. He himself also with picked men of his army entered the town, and all the citizens of every rank and age came to meet him and cast upon him and his soldiers garlands and such

THE GREAT BATTLE

flowers as grow about the Nile, and commended him greatly for his notable victory. As soon as he came within the walls, riding upon an elephant instead of a chariot, he busied his mind about the service of the gods and sacred things, and asked of the origin of the Nile feast, and if they could show him anything worthy to be looked at. They showed him the deep well which gives the measure of the Nile's flow, like unto that at Memphis, made of smooth stones evenly laid, wherein were lines drawn an ell one from the other ; into the which the water of the Nile, brought under the earth by a spring and falling into these lines, declareth to the inhabitants the ebb and flood of the river, by the number of the figures which, bare or covered, do plainly tell the rising and falling of its waters. They showed him also the pointers of their sundials which gave no shadow at midday because the sun about midsummer at Syene is exactly over head and for the same reason shineth upon the water at the bottom of their wells. But Hydaspes marvelled not at this as a thing strange to him, for he saw the like at Meroe. Then they talked of their feast and praised the Nile wonderfully, calling him the sun and author of fruitfulness, the saviour of Upper Egypt and the father and maker of Lower Egypt, bringing down new soil every year, wherfrom the Greeks call him Neilos : he telleth the course of the year by flowing in summer and ebbing in autumn, while he shows the spring by the flowers he brings forth and by the brood of crocodiles. They said indeed that the Nile was himself the year, approving this opinion by his name : for, if the letters thereof are taken as numbers, put together they make three hundred and sixty-five, and so many days are there in the year. But when they added to all this the properties of the

plants and flowers and beasts that he breeds Hydaspes said : ‘ These fine tales do not belong only to Egypt but to Ethiopia also. And seeing that it is Ethiopia who sends you this river which you deem a god and all the river creatures, you have good cause to honour her as being the mother of your gods.’ ‘ We do honour her,’ said the priests, ‘ both for other reasons and because she has sent us in you a saviour and a god.’

Hydaspes told them that such praise were best left unsaid, and then going to his tent spent the rest of the day in banqueting with the chief lords of Ethiopia and the priests of Syene, giving leave to his army to do the same. There were great herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, many goats and swine, and abundance of wine, whereof the Syenians gave some to the army and some they sold. The next day Hydaspes sat on his royal throne and divided among his soldiers the cattle, horses, and all the other booty taken in the city or in the battle, giving to every man according as he had deserved. When the man who had taken Oroondates came forward, Hydaspes said : ‘ Ask what thou wilt.’ He answered : ‘ I need ask nothing, O king, but will be content, if it pleaseth you, with what I have, which I took from Oroondates, saving his life at your command.’ And therewith he showed him the governor’s dagger, set with precious stones of great value and wonderful much worth, so that some of those that stood by cried out that it was too much for a private man and a jewel more fit for the king. Thereat Hydaspes smiled and said : ‘ What can be more fit for a king than that I should be of such greatness of mind as not to be moved by this man’s covetousness but rather to despise it? Besides, the law of battle giveth the victor leave to take whatsoever

he findeth on his prisoner's body. Wherefore we give him permission to keep that which he might have concealed, and we never the wiser.'

After him came those who had taken Theagenes and Chariclea, and said : ' O king, our booty is not gold nor precious stones, which are of little worth in Ethiopia and cast about by heaps in the king's palace. We bring you a young man and a maid, brother and sister, born in Greece, who, except your grace, are the tallest and fairest creatures in the world. Wherefore we crave that we also may be partakers of your large liberality and bounty.' ' Well remembered,' said Hydaspes. ' When you brought them to me before it was in a turmoil and I only looked upon them carelessly. Wherefore let some man bring them hither straightway, and the other prisoners also.' They were brought out of hand, for one ran immediately to the baggage train without the walls and told their keepers that they should bring them to the king forthwith. They asked one of their guards, whose father was a Greek, whither they should be taken. He answered that king Hydaspes would see them. As soon as they heard the name Hydaspes, they cried out : ' The gods be our comfort'; because till then they had been afraid lest another was king. Then said Theagenes to Chariclea : ' Now, my heart, you shall tell the king of our affairs, seeing Hydaspes reigneth, whom you have told me oft was your father.' Chariclea answered : ' My dear, great business must be done with great circumspection. For it is necessary that the ends of those things should be done with many circumstances, whose beginnings the gods have made troublesome. Nor is it meet to reveal in a moment that which hath been long a working, especially when the head and principal point, whereon

the business of our recognition dependeth, I mean my mother Persina, is now away, although by the favour of the gods we hear that she also is alive.' 'But if we be sacrificed,' said Theagenes, 'or given away as captives, will not our opportunity to come to Ethiopia be cut away from us?' 'You need not fear that,' said Chariclea, 'for we have heard divers times ere now that we are kept to be sacrificed to the gods at Meroe. Wherefore you need not think that we shall either be given away or killed before we come there, seeing we are consecrated to the gods, which thing godly men will not undo. But if we yield too quickly to our joy and without consideration tell our story, when there is no one here to know and bear witness thereto, it is to be feared that we shall incense him that heareth us and make him deservedly angry. Perhaps also he will make a mock and jest of it, that we, being prisoners and appointed to slavery, shall be so bold as to say that we are the king's children, having no probable arguments to prove the same.' 'But the tokens,' said Theagenes, 'which I know you received and keep upon you, will make for us, and declare that we use no fraud nor falsehood.' 'Tokens,' said Chariclea, 'are tokens to those who know them and gave me them; but to those who know them not and cannot understand the whole matter they are but a vain treasure: and perhaps would make them lay theft and robbery to our charge. And even though Hydaspes should recognise some of them, who is there to convince him that Persina gave them to me as a mother to her daughter. The surest token, Theagenes, is a mother's nature, whereby it cometh to pass that that which doth engender is by some secret of nature affected with pity and love toward that which is engendered. Shall we then

neglect this, which will make all the rest seem true ?'

As they thus talked of these things, they were almost come into the king's presence ; and Bagoas also was brought in with them. As soon as the king saw them stand before him, he lifted himself up a little from his throne, and saying : ' The gods be merciful to me ' sat down again in a study. When his noblemen asked him what he ailed, he made answer : ' I thought this last night that I had a daughter who suddenly was grown to such a stature as this woman has, and though I took no regard to my dream before, yet now by the beauty of this maid who is like her I remember it again.' Those who were about him said that it was a fantasy of the mind, which oftentimes foreshadowed things to come ; but for the moment he made no more account of it and asked the young folks who they were and whence they came. Chariclea held her peace and Theagenes said that they were brother and sister, born in Greece. ' O noble Greece,' cried the king, ' who at all times dost bring forth good and honest creatures, and now hast provided us with these auspicious victims to be sacrificed in honour of our victory. But why had I not a son also in my dreams ? ' he said smilingly to them that were by. ' This young man, the maid's brother, who was to come before me should also have been shadowed forth to me in my sleep, according to your account.' Then turning to Chariclea and speaking Greek—for that tongue is held in honour among the Gymnosophsists and princes of Ethiopia—he said : ' Thou maid, why dost thou hold thy peace and not answer my question ? ' Chariclea answered : ' At the altars of the gods, to whom we understand that we are kept to be sacrificed, you you shall know of me and my parents.' ' In what

country are they ?' asked Hydaspes again. 'They are here,' quoth she, 'and will surely be present when we are offered as sacrifice.' Thereat Hydaspes smiled and said : 'This daughter born to me in my sleep dreams that her parents shall be conveyed out of Greece into the midst of Meroe. Let these then be carried away and kept as well as they have been hitherto, to set forth and adorn our sacrifice. But who is he that standeth by them, so like an eunuch ?' One of those who were there answered that he was an eunuch indeed, whose name was Bagoas. 'Let him go then with these others,' said the king, 'not as a sacrifice himself, but to watch and guard this maid, that she may be kept chaste until the time come that she be offered. For eunuchs naturally are very jealous : wherefore they are set to hinder others from those things that they themselves are not able to do.'

When he had said this, he reviewed the other prisoners in order : whereof some, such as seemed born to be slaves, he gave away, but such as were of noble parentage he let go freely. But he picked out ten young men and ten maidens, of those that were most excellent in youth and comeliness, and bade that they should be taken with Theagenes and Chariclea for the same purpose. Then when he had answered every man's requests, he sent for Oroöndates, who was brought before him in a litter, and said : 'Since I have now obtained that for which we made this war, namely Phylae and the emerald mines, I am not minded as many men are, nor will I abuse my fortune to get more than others possess. Moreover I do not desire an infinite empire because of this victory, but am content with those boundaries which nature made at first, when she separated Egypt from Ethiopia by the cataracts. Wherefore observing

equity I am now returning thither, having got what I came down for. As for thee, if thou live, be governor of all thou hadst before, and tell the king of Persia that thy brother Hydaspes conquered thee in battle, but in moderation of mind gave thee back all that was thine, being desirous to keep thy friendship—which he accounts the fairest of all things among men—although he will not refuse to fight again, if thou shalt attempt anything hereafter. As for these people of Syene I remit them their tribute for ten years and charge you to do the same.'

When he had said this the citizens and the soldiers who were by thanked him and clapped their hands so loud that the noise might be heard a great way off. But Oroondates stretched out his hands and laying them crossways fell down and did obeisance to him, which thing the Persians are never wont to do to any strange king, and said: 'Ye that be present, me-thinketh that I break not the custom of my country if I recognise as king the man who hath given me my governorship, neither do I wrong if I render obeisance to the justest man in the world, who might have slain me. But he gave me my life rather, and although he could have made me his slave, he hath given me my governorship again. Wherefore I promise both the Ethiopians and the Persians that, if I live, I will keep long peace and continual amity and perform to the Syenians that which I am commanded. But if anything should befall me, then I pray that the gods may reward Hydaspes and his house and all his posterity for the good deeds he hath done towards me.'

THE TENTH BOOK

THE MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

Let this suffice concerning what was done about Syene, which, after it was come into so great a danger, by the clemency and equity of one man received so good a turn. This done, Hydaspes sent a great part of his army before and went himself into Ethiopia, the people of Syene and all the Persians following him a great way and praising him much and making many supplications for his good and prosperous health. First he took his journey along the banks of the Nile and such other places as were near unto the same. But after he came to the Cataracts and had sacrificed to the Nile and the other gods of the land, he turned aside and went through the middle country rather. When he came to Phylae he gave his army leave to rest and refresh themselves for two days, and sending away a great number of his meanest soldiers tarried himself, to fortify the walls and set a garrison. This done, he chose two horsemen, who should ride in post before him and in certain towns and villages change their horses, with letters to Meroe to certify them of his victory. To the wise men who are called Gymnosophists and are of the king's council he wrote thus.

'To the divine council Hydaspes sendeth greeting. I certify you of the victory I have had over the Persians. Yet I make no great count of my success

but pay homage rather to the instability of fortune. I salute and commend by this letter your holy priesthood, which as at all times so now hath told me the truth. I pray you also and, as far as I may, command you to come to the appointed place, that with your presence you may make the sacrifice more acceptable to all the people of Ethiopia.' To his wife Persina he wrote thus : ' Know that we have won the day, and, what touches you more nearly, are in good health. Wherefore make sumptuous provision to do sacrifice of thanksgiving to the gods, and when you have shewn the wise men our letters and exhorted them to be present, hasten to be in the field before the city, which is consecrated to our gods, the Sun, the Moon, and Bacchus.'

When Persina had read this letter she said : ' Surely this was the dream I had last night. I thought that I was with child and brought forth a daughter who was straightway ripe for marriage. I guess now that my sorrow in travail betokened the battle, and my daughter the victory. Wherefore go into the city and tell them of this joyful news.' The couriers did as she commanded, and wreathing their heads with lotus of the Nile, and waving branches of palm in their hands they rode through the chief places of the city ; and if they had said nothing else their gestures and the habit of their body would have declared the victory. Therefore all Meroe was suddenly full of joy, and the people flocked together, and sacrificed day and night in every family, street, and tribe, and thronged the temples ; not so much glad of the victory as that Hydaspes was safe, because by his equity and courteous usage he had so won the hearts of his subjects that they loved him as a father.

Persina prepared great droves of oxen and horses and sheep, together with wild asses and gryphons and

all manner of other beasts, and sent them before into the sacred field, that of every kind there might be a hecatomb, while what was left should serve for the public feast. Then she went to the Gymnosopists who dwell in the grove of Pan and gave them Hydaspes' letters, and prayed them to fulfil the king's request, and do her a pleasure and be an ornament to the sacrifice by their presence. They asked her to stay a while, and went themselves into the temple to pray and seek counsel from the gods what was best to do. Returning by and by, Sisimithres, who was chief of the kings council, said : ' We will come, Persina ; for the gods command us so to do : marry they fore-show that there will be a stir and business at the sacri-fice, but it will have a good and delectable end, because that destiny will bring to light a member of your body for which you have sought, and a part of the kingdom which has long been lost.' ' Even terrible things,' said Persina ' will change, and end happily, if you are here. And I will send you word when I hear that Hydaspes is almost come.' ' You need not send us word when he will come,' quoth Sisimithres ; ' for to-morrow morning he will be here, and so you will have knowledge by his letter anon.' And it hap-pened so indeed. When Persina had departed and was almost come home to the king's palace, a post gave her letters from the king that told her he would be there the next day. Then straightway heralds spread the news abroad, commanding the men only to go out to meet the king, and forbidding the women. For as they were to sacrifice to the brightest and most pure of the gods, the Sun and the Moon, it was not the custom for women to be present, lest the sacrifice should unknowingly be defiled. Only the priestess of the Moon might take part ; which was Persina, for

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

by the custom of the country the king is the Sun's priest, and the queen the Moon's. Chariclea also was to be there, not as a looker on, but as a sacrifice to the moon. Then was there great ado in the city, and the people did not wait for the appointed day but that evening began to pass over the river Astabora, some by the bridge, others who dwelled afar off in boats made of reeds, whereof many grow at the river's side. And these boats are very swift, both because of the stuff whereof they are made and also for their burden, since they never carry more than two or three persons. For the reed is cut into two parts and of either part they make a boat.

Meroe the chief city of Ethiopia is a three-cornered island about which do run navigable rivers, the Nile, and the Astabora and the Asasoba. At the topmost point is the Nile, which there divides itself into two parts ; the other two rivers run on both sides one by the other, and then meeting fall into the Nile, and yield their waters and their name. The island is very large and almost imitates the mainland—for it is three hundred three score and fifteen miles long and six score and five broad—and it engenders beasts of wonderful greatness of all kinds and especially elephants. Trees grow there without the work of men, and it brings forth much other fruit. There are palm trees of great height which bear stores of dates, and corn and wheat of such tallness that it will hide a man on horseback and even sometimes though he sits upon a camel. And the reeds that grow there are such as we spake of before.

The people spent the night in crossing the rivers, and going on to meet Hydaspes received him with great shouts and clamours as though he had been a god. But the Gymnosophsists waited for him just

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

before the sacred field and gave him their hands and welcomed him with kisses. When they had done, Persina met him in the temple porch. Then after prayers were ended and thanksgiving for his victory and safe return, they made them ready for the public sacrifice. The king sat in a tabernacle built before for the purpose, which was made of four reeds newly cut down, four square, so that at every corner stood a reed to stay it up instead of a pillar, while the top was round and covered with divers boughs, the fairest whereof were branches broken from the palm trees. In another tabernacle close by upon a high platform were set the images of the native gods and the pictures of their heroes, Memnon, Perseus and Andromeda, whom the kings of Ethiopia suppose to be the authors of their stock. On a lower platform, with the gods as it were above their heads, sat the Gymnosophists. About them stood a company of soldiers, with lifted shields touching one another, who kept back the multitude and reserved a place in the midst for the sacrifices free from tumult. Hydaspes in few words declared to the people his victory and what he had done else fortunately for the common wealth, and then commanded the priests to begin the sacrifice. There were three altars made, of which the two appertaining to the Sun and Moon were set together. The third, the altar of Bacchus, was erected a good way off, and thereon they sacrificed all manner of living things, because that the power of his divinity extends over all the people, I think, and pleases every man. Upon the other altars, they offered to the Sun four white horses, the swiftest of creatures to the most rapid of the gods ; to the Moon a pair of oxen, giving her who is nearest to the earth those animals that work the earth.

While these things were a doing, suddenly a confused and mingled shout arose, as was like from such an infinite multitude, crying : ‘ Let the rites of our country be performed ; let the wonted sacrifice for the nation be offered : let the first fruits of the war be presented to the gods.’ Hydaspes perceived that they called for human sacrifices, which are wont to be offered only from those that are taken in foreign wars, and beckoned with his hand, and told them that he would do forthwith what they required ; and there-upon he commanded that the prisoners appointed for the purpose be brought forth ; among whom came Theagenes and Chariclea, loosed from their chains and with garlands upon their heads. All the others were very heavy, and good reason why, save that Theagenes was less dismayed than the rest. But Chariclea smiled and went with a cheerful countenance, and ever looked steadfastly upon Persina, so that the queen herself was moved thereby, and sore sighing said : ‘ O husband, what a maid have you appointed to be sacrificed ! I know not whether I ever saw so fair a creature. What a stout stomach and what a beautiful visage hath she ! With how courageous a heart beareth she this misfortune ! How doth she move my mind by reason of her flowering age ! If the daughter I had by you, who was so cruelly lost, had lived, she would have been almost as old. I would to God, husband, you might deliver her by some means from this peril. Surely I should have great comfort if she served at my table and waited upon me. Perhaps also the unhappy creature is a Greek, for never was there such a face in Egypt.’ ‘ She is a Greek ’ answered he ; ‘ and as to her parents she promised that she would shew them to us at this time ; though how she can I know not. But that she should be

delivered from this sacrifice is not possible ; although I would fain it were, for I too am moved somewhat by the maid and feel compassion toward her. You know that our law requireth a man to be offered to the Sun and a woman to the Moon, and as she was the first prisoner brought to me and ordained for this purpose, the people would be content with no excuse. Only one help is there, if she be found not to be a clean virgin when she shall go to the fire, seeing that the law willeth that she who is offered to the Moon shall be clean, and likewise he that is sacrificed to the Sun ; but as for Bacchus it makes no great matter. But take heed that if she be found at the fire to have accompanied with men it will not be seemly to take her into your household.' Then said Persina : ' Let her be found to have done that, so that only she be saved. Captivity, war, and banishment so far from her own country do excuse her even if she have done any such thing, whose beauty is sufficient to make her to be forced.'

While she spake thus and wept—although she would not have them that were by perceive it—Hydaspes commanded the sacred fire to be brought. Then the priests, choosing young children from among the crowd—for they alone could touch it without hurt—brought the fire from the temple and set it in the midst and bade all the prisoners tread upon it. But when they trod they were burned in the soles of their feet and were not able to abide even for a moment, there being spits of gold laid in the fire that possessed power to burn every unchaste person and those that were forsworn ; but such as had lived purely might tread upon them and have no harm. Wherefore they set aside all these prisoners for Bacchus and the other gods, save only two or three maids of Greece who

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

were found by the fire to have kept their virginity.

When Theagenes put his foot to the fire and was found a maid, there was great wondering among the people, both because he was so tall and beautiful and also that being young and lusty he never had to do with any woman : and so he was appointed to be offered to the Sun. Then spake he softly to Chariclea : ‘ Is sacrificing the reward of such as live cleanly in Ethiopia, and shall they be slain who keep their virginity ? Why, Chariclea, do you not now manifest yourself ? What other time do you look for hereafter, or will you tarry till some one cut our throats ? Utter, I pray you, and tell your estate. Perhaps when you are known you will save me ; and if not, you yourself at least will escape from danger : which thing when I see I shall be content to die.’ She answered him that the time was now at hand and that all their fortune was now at six and seven ; and then, without tarrying for any command from those who had charge of that matter, she put upon her the holy garment that she had brought from Delphi, which she always carried in a little fardell about her, wrought with gold and bright gleaming spangles. Then casting her hair abroad, like one taken with a divine fury, she ran and leapt into the fire and stood there a great while unharmed, her beauty shining the more, so that every man marvelled at her, and by reason of her dress thought her more like a goddess than a mortal woman. Thereat was every man amazed and muttered sore, but nothing they said plainly ; and above all things they wondered that she, being more beautiful than any mortal woman and in her best youth, had not lost her virginity. So that many of the company were sorrowful that she was fit to be offered, and if they wist how would gladly have delivered her, even

though they were very superstitious. But Persina above all was sad, and spake to Hydaspes : ‘ How unhappy is this wench who boasteth so of her virginity at this unseasonable time, and will pay with death for all her praise ! What can be done, husband ? ’ He answered : ‘ You trouble me to no purpose and vainly pity her who cannot be saved, but has been kept from the beginning, it seems, for the gods, because of the great excellency of her nature.’ Then turning to the Gymnosophists he said : ‘ Right wise men, seeing that all things are ready, why do you not begin the sacrifice ? ’ ‘ God forbid,’ said Sisimithres speaking in Greek that the people might not understand : ‘ we have defiled our eyes and ears too much with this that is done already. As for us, we will go away hence to the temple, for this abominable sacrifice of men and women we do not ourselves allow, nor do we think the gods approve. I would that we might prevent indeed all sacrifice that is made with slaughter of living things, for in our opinion that sufficeth which is done with prayers and the sweet savour of incense. Do you tarry—for it is necessary beyond doubt at times for a king to bow to the desire of the multitude—and perform this unholy sacrifice, which because of the ancient law of Ethiopia cannot be avoided. Hereafter will you need purification—and yet perhaps no ; for I do not think that this sacrifice will ever be performed. That I guess both from the other signs that God now gives me and from the light that shines around these strangers signifying that some god is their defender.’

When he had said this, he and the others who sat with him arose and prepared to depart. But Chariclea leapt out of the fire and ran to him and fell at his

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

knees—in spite of the officers who would have stayed her, because they thought that her supplication was for nothing else but to crave that she might not die—and said : ‘ Most wise men, stay a little ; for I have a cause to plead with the king and queen, and must have judgment thereon, and I hear that you only can give sentence upon such noble persons. Wherefore abide, and be judges in this plea of life and death ; for you shall know that it is neither possible nor just to offer me to the gods.’ They heard what she said gladly, and spake to the king saying : ‘ Dost thou hear, O king, this appeal and what this stranger requireth ? ’ Hydaspes smiled and said ‘ What fashion of judgment may this be, and what have I to do with her, and on what grounds of equity doth it depend ? ’ ‘ That which she will say,’ quoth Sisimithres, ‘ will declare that.’ ‘ But will not the matter seem no judgment but plain insolence,’ said Hydaspes, ‘ if the king stand to plead against a prisoner ? ’ ‘ Equity and justice have no respect for honour and estate’ answered Sisimithres ; ‘ with them he is king who bringeth the best reasons.’ Hydaspes said : ‘ The law giveth you leave to determine controversies between the king and his subjects, not with aliens and strangers.’ Sisimithres answered : ‘ Wise and discreet men do not measure justice by outward appearances but rather by equity.’ ‘ Well,’ quoth Hydaspes, ‘ let her speak, since it is Sisimithres’ pleasure ; but it is manifest that she will speak nothing to the purpose, but only some foolish things devised to make delay, as those who are in extreme peril are commonly wont to do.’

Chariclea was already bold of spirit, for hope of her delivery from these dangers which she trusted

AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

would come to pass, but when she heard the name of Sisimithres she was exceeding glad. For he it was who first took her and gave her to Charicles these ten years past, when he was sent as ambassador to Oroöndates about the emerald mines. At that time he was but one of the Gymnosophists, but now he was chief of all the rest. Chariclea knew him not by face, because she was separated from him very young when she was but seven years old ; marry she remembered his name, and was the more glad for that, because she trusted he would be her advocate and help her to be known. Therefore she held her hands up to heaven and said aloud that all might hear : ‘ O Sun, the founder of my ancestors’ pedigree, and ye other gods and heroes, bear me witness that I say nothing but truth, and help me in this case, wherein of many just pleas I will begin with this : Doth the law command strangers, O king, or men of this country to be sacrificed ? ’ ‘ Strangers,’ quoth he. ‘ Then it is time,’ she said, ‘ that you seek some other to be sacrificed ; for you will find me to be one of this country born and your subject.’ He marvelled at this and said she lied. ‘ Soft,’ quoth Chariclea, ‘ you wonder at small things, but there be greater matters than this, for I am not only of this country but also of the blood royal.’ Hydaspes despised her words and turned away as though they were folly. ‘ Nay, father,’ quoth she, ‘ leave off thus to despise and refuse your own daughter.’ Thereon the king not only despised her but waxed very wroth, thinking this to be scorn and intolerable insolence, and said : ‘ Sisimithres and ye others, how long shall she abuse my patience ? Is not the maid stark mad, with bold lies seeking to avoid death ? She pretends that she is my daughter as though this were a scene in a comedy.

For my part I never had so good luck as to have a child : once only it was told me that I had one, but I lost her forthwith. Wherefore let some one carry her away, that she delay the sacrifice no longer.' 'No man shall carry me away,' cried Chariclea, 'except the judges command it : you yourself are not judge now, you are being judged. The law perhaps suffereth you, O king, to kill strangers, but neither this law nor the law of nature allows you, father, to kill your own children. For the gods will prove this day that you are my father, though you say nay. Every controversy in law, O king, standeth upon two points especially ; that is to say, on proof by writings and confirmation by witnesses ; and I will bring both to prove that I am your daughter. For my witness I will bring none of the common sort but the judge himself—for the judge's knowledge is the surest proof methinks that a pleader can give—and for writings I will lay before you this, which shall tell you both of mine and of your estate.'

Saying this she took the band that was exposed with her, which she wore about her body, and unfolded it and gave it to Persina. As soon as the queen saw it she was straightway so amazed that she could say never a word, and looked a great while upon that which was written therein and upon the maid together, so that for fear she trembled and sweat sore, and was glad of what she saw, marry she was much troubled with the suddenness of the chance, which happened in such sort as no man would believe it. Besides she feared lest Hydaspes should suspect somewhat now that this was discovered, and be too light of belief, or angry, or perhaps punish her. Insomuch that Hydaspes seeing her so troubled said : ' Wife, what meaneth this ? Doth aught contained in this writing

thus trouble thee ?' 'O king,' quoth she, 'my lord and husband, I have nothing to say thereto ; take it and read it yourself ; it will tell you all well enough.' And as soon as she had given it she sat silent with downcast face. When Hydaspes had it, and called the Gymnosophists to read it with him, he ran over the same and marvelled much thereat himself, and perceived well that Sisimithres was amazed and that a thousand thoughts arose in his mind, so that he looked often upon the writing and often upon the maid. At length when he had read of how she was exposed and the reason thereof he said : 'I know well that a daughter was born to me and that I was told she was dead, and I learn now, as Persina herself says, that she was not dead but was sent abroad to seek her fortune. But who was the man who took her up, saved her, and nourished her thus, and who was he that carried her to Egypt ? Has she not been taken now as a prisoner ? To be short, how may I know that this is she, and that my child who was cast forth is not dead, and some one happening on these tokens is not now abusing fortune ? I fear that some evil spirit is mocking us with this maid for his instrument, and that scorning our desire to have a child he puts off some changeling upon us and by this writing darkens the truth.'

To this Sisimithres answered : 'I can resolve you of your first doubt. I am the man who took her up and kept her secretly and carried her to Egypt, when you sent me thither as ambassador. You know that we may not lie. And I recognise the writing on the band, which is, as you see, in the royal Ethiopian characters, and you have good reason to know it too, for it was written by Persina's hand. But there were

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

other tokens also which I gave to him who received her from me, a Greek and by seeming a good and honest man.' 'I have them also,' said Chariclea ; and so showed them the jewels ; with which sight Persina was more astonished than she was before. When Hydaspes asked her what they were and whether she knew anything thereof she gave him no other answer but that she knew them, marry it was better to make further trial of these things at home. Then was Hydaspes almost beside himself again. But Chariclea said : 'These tokens my mother gave me ; but this ring is yours.' And therewith she showed him the Pantarbe. Hydaspes knew it, for he gave it to Persina when he was betrothed to her, and said : 'These tokens, good maid, are mine, but I am not yet assured that you who have them are my daughter, and have not come by them by some other means. For to omit other things, your colour is strange and the like is not seen in Ethiopia.' 'She was white also,' said Sisimithres, 'that I took up : moreover the term of years doth well agree with the age of this maid ; for the time when the child was exposed is now seventeen years gone and she is seventeen years old. The look of her eyes too makes for us, and I recognise the excellent beauty of her body to be like that I saw at that time.' 'Sisimithres,' quoth Hydaspes, 'you have said very well, and rather have defended this cause as an advocate than sat upon it in judgment. But beware that, while you take away part of this doubt, you rouse not a hard question and one difficult for my wife to resolve. How is it possible in reason that we being both Ethiopians should beget a white child ?' Sisimithres looked aside upon him, and smiling scornfully said : 'I know not what aileth you that you thus strangely reproach

me with my advocacy. I deem that I might not neglect the same, for we count that man to be a true judge who is ever the advocate of what is just. And why should I not seem to have pleaded for you as much as for the maid ? By the help of Heaven I have shewn you to be her father. Was I to neglect the child whom I saved in her cradle, now that she has been preserved for you in the bloom of her youth ? Think as you will of us, we care not at all. For we live not to please other men but to content our own conscience, following after right and equity. As touching your question of her colour, the writing on the band answereth you, for Persina there allows that in her conception she drew somewhat from the figure of Andromeda, by looking upon her when you had to do with her. If you desire to be fully satisfied herein, look yourself also now, and you will find that Andromeda is as well expressed in the maid as in the picture without any difference.'

Thereupon the servants were bidden to bring the picture in, and when they set it down near to Chariclea there was such a shout among the people, wondering at the exactness of the likeness and telling the story to those who knew it not, that Hydaspes himself could disbelieve no more, but stood a great while held fast with joy and amazement. 'One point still is wanting,' quoth Sisimithres : 'this is a question of the throne, and the true succession and above all of verity. Strip up your sleeve, maid. There was a black spot above your elbow. It is no shame to be stripped to testify to your parents and kindred.' Chariclea uncovered her left arm, and upon it there was a circle as of ebony staining the ivory of her skin. Persina then could contain herself no longer. She leapt from her throne and embraced her and wept,

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

and for the exceedingness of her joy which she could not conceal she broke into sobs and mutterings, and almost fell to the ground in Chariclea's arms. Hydaspes had pity upon his wife, when he saw her lament so, and himself was like affected in his mind too ; but he kept the tears back from his eyes, as if they had been made of iron or horn, as he looked upon what was being done. His heart swelled with fatherly affection and with manly spirit, so that he was drawn both ways ; but at length nature prevailed, which overcometh all things, and not only did he suffer himself to be persuaded that he was a father, but was also affected like a father, so that when he saw Persina fall, he took her up, embraced Chariclea, and with tears as with an offering made a fatherly league with her. Yet he did not forget what he had to do, but stood still a while and looked upon the people, who were affected like himself and through joy and pity wept to see that strange hap and would not hear the heralds' cries which commanded silence. Wherefore he stretched out his hand and bade them be still, and when he had appeased them he said : ' Ye people that are present, contrary to all hope, as you see and hear, the gods have declared that I am a father, and that this is my daughter is proved by many arguments. Yet do I owe such good will to you and my country that without regard to the succession of my blood or the joy I have to be called father—both of which things by her are now like to ensue—I am ready on your behalf to offer her to the gods. I see that you are weeping and are affected like men, pitying the untimely age of the maid appointed to die, and pitying also my vain hope of succession hereafter ; yet even though perhaps you say nay, I must needs perform the custom of our country, and rather have regard to the

public utility than to my private profit. I know not whether it be the gods' will to give her to me and at once to take her away—as they did when first she was born and now are like to do again when she is found—but I leave that to be scanned by your discretion; nor can I determine whether they would have her sacrificed, whom they have banished into the farthest part of the world and by a wonderful chance brought to me again as a prisoner. I slew her not when she was my enemy, nor did I insult her when she was my captive, but now, when she has been shewn to be my daughter, I will sacrifice her, if you wish it, without more ado. I will not yield to affection, which in another father perhaps deserved pardon, nor hesitate, nor beg you to excuse me and justify this before the law, nor will I put the claims of nature first or think that in some other fashion we might appease the gods. Even as you have been like affected with me and have grieved for my sorrows as your own, so now I will make more account of your public weal than mine own, caring not for my loss or for poor Persina's tears, who now hath seen her first child and is at once made childless again. Wherefore, if you will, leave your weeping and fruitless pitying of me, and let us go to the sacrifice. As for thee, my daughter—for now for the first and last time I call thee by that pleasant name—whose beauty is peerless to no purpose, and hast found thy parents in vain, in an ill time happening upon thine own country worse to thee than any strange land, who hast been safe in other countries—but art in danger of death in thine own, trouble not my mind with sorrowful weeping, but if ever thou didst show thyself to be of stout courage and princely mind, now pluck up thy heart and follow thy father, who cannot provide a marriage for thee nor bring thee

to bed in any costly bowers, but makes thee ready for sacrifice and bears before thee not such tapers as are used for bridals but those appointed for sacrifice, and in place of a victim offers thine unspeakable beauty. And bear with me, O ye gods, if affection hath caused me to speak anything that is scarce godly or religious, who have both called this maid my daughter and am ready to take her life away.'

When he had said thus he took Chariclea by the hand and made as though he would lead her to the altars and the pyre. But his own heart burned with a fiercer fire and he prayed that the words he had spoken to the people might be of no effect. Then the whole multitude of the Ethiopians was moved and would not suffer him to lead Chariclea one foot further but cried out suddenly aloud : ' Save the maid : save the blood royal : save her whom the gods have preserved. We thank you, you have done for us all that the law requireth, we acknowledge you for our good king. Now acknowledge yourself to be a father, and may the gods forgive us for our offence, if so it seems. Our offence will be greater if we resist their will. Let no man be so bold as to kill her whom they have preserved. You, who are the father of the people abroad, be father in your own house at home also.' A thousand other things like these they said, and at length to show that they would prevent him in deed, they stepped before him and would not suffer him to go forward, but desired him to appease the gods with some other sacrifice. Hydaspes was content with all his heart to yield in this matter, and without much ado to bear this wished enforcement, and gave the people leave to wish him joy of his good luck, seeing that they were shouting and leaping in gladness and thinking that anon they would make an end of their own accord.

Then he himself standing nearer to Chariclea said : ' Dear daughter, that thou art my child hath been proved by the tokens and wise Sisimithres beareth witness and above all the favour of the gods hath declared. But what fellow is this who was taken with thee and is now at the altar ready to be sacrificed, or how did you call him your brother when you were brought into my presence at Syene first ? I do not think that he too will be proved my son ; for Persina had no more but you at one time.' Chariclea blushed and cast down her eyes and said : ' I told you an untruth when I said he was my brother, but necessity forced me to make that excuse. What he is indeed he can tell you better than I ; for he is a man, and therefore will not be afraid to speak more boldly than I, who am a woman.' Hydaspes not perceiving what she meant said : ' My daughter, pardon me because I made thee to blush in asking thee a question whereto a maid ought not answer. But sit you in the tabernacle with your mother, who will be more glad of you now than when you were born to her, and whereas she is ill at ease comfort her with your presence and tell her your affairs. I will see to the sacrifice and seek out some other maid, if there be any to be found, who may be sacrificed in your stead with the young man.'

Chariclea almost cried out for rage when she heard that Theagenes should be sacrificed. Yet, because it was best, with much ado she concealed her mad affection, and aiming secretly at her purpose again said : ' Sire, you need not seek another woman, seeing that the people through me have remitted that part of the sacrifice. But if any one insist, then you must not only seek another woman but another man also : if you do not, then you must sacrifice none other but

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

me with him.' 'God forbid,' said the king. 'Why say you so?' She answered: 'Because the gods have appointed that I must both live and die with this man.' Hydaspes not yet understanding the truth said: 'Daughter, I praise you for your courtesy, in that you have pity upon this Greek stranger, your companion and fellow captive, with whom in your travels you have fallen acquainted, and desire to save his life. But he cannot be delivered from the sacrifice. It is not right at all that the custom of our country be broken as concerns the making of sacrifice for victory; and besides the people will not be content, who scarcely even by the goodness of the gods were moved to pity thee.' Then said Chariclea: 'O king—for perhaps I may not call thee father—if the goodness of the gods hath saved my body, that same goodness now may save my soul; for that this is my soul the gods of destiny know. But if the fates allow not this, and the slaughter of this stranger must needs adorn this offering, grant me one request. Let me kill the victim, and I will get me a name for stoutness among the Ethiopians, with a sword that shall be the greatest thing and the dearest that ever you shall be able to give me.'

Hydaspes was troubled at this, and said: 'I understand not what this contrariety in your mind meaneth, who lately wished to defend and save the stranger, and now would with your own hand kill him as if he were your mortal enemy. Nor do I see for one of your age what honour or glory can be in such a thing. But even if there were, it is not possible; for this deed is only lawful for the priests of the Sun and Moon, and not to all of them, but only to the man who hath a wife and the wife who hath a husband. Which being so, your virginity doth debar your strange

request.' 'Truly,' said Chariclea to Persina in her ear, 'that need not prevent me. I have one already who fulfils that part, if you be willing.' 'We will be willing,' said Persina merrily, 'and with the gods consent we will marry you to some one whom we shall choose worthy both of you and us.' Chariclea then spake more plainly: 'You need not choose him; he is chosen already.' She was about to say something more openly—for the present peril that she saw Theagenes in emboldened her and made her lay aside her maidenly modesty—but Hydaspes would hear no longer and said: 'Ye gods, how seem you to mingle evil things and good together and to lessen in one way or other this unlooked for felicity of mine. You have given me a daughter whom I never expected, but you have made her in a manner mad. For must we not judge her frenzied that speaketh such foolish words? She called him her brother who was not so. When she was asked who this stranger was, she answered that she knew him not. Then, him whom she knew not she sought to save as her friend. Which when it was denied her, she begged me that she might kill him as her greatest enemy. When this could not be granted her, because it was lawful for none to do it but such a one as had a husband, she said that she was married, and named not to whom. How can she have a husband when the fire declares that he neither is nor ever has been. Unless perchance in her case alone that doth err which with the Ethiopians is an unerring trial of chastity, and sent her away unburned when she trod upon it, and would give her grace falsely to play the virgin. I never saw any but her who made the same man her friend and her enemy in one minute of an hour, and feigned to have brothers and husbands who never were.'

Wherefore, wife, go you into the tabernacle and see if you can bring her to her wits again ; whether she is made mad by the god who cometh to this sacrifice, or is beside herself with too much joy because of this unlooked for fortune. I will tell someone to look and find another maid in her place who must be sacrificed to the gods, and meanwhile I will go and deal with the embassies that have come from diverse foreign lands and receive the gifts that they have brought to welcome me home after my victory.'

When he had said this he sat on a high seat near to the tabernacle, and commanded the legates to come and let him see what they brought. The chamberlain Harmonias asked him whether all should come together or each nation in order by itself. 'Let each one come in order,' quoth he, 'that I may honour every man as he deserves.' 'Then,' said the chamberlain, 'your brother's son Meroebus shall come first, who has just arrived and waits beyond the guard for himself to be announced.' 'Thou dolt,' quoth Hydaspes, 'why didst thou not tell me of him forthwith ? Thou knowest that he is no legate but a king, my brother's son who deceased but lately, whom I have placed on his throne and by adoption have made my heir.' 'All this I knew, O king,' said Harmonias ; 'but I thought it best to wait for the fitting moment, and that is a thing for chamberlains that beyond all needs care. Pardon me therefore, I beseech you, if I durst not be so bold as to break off the pleasant talk you had with the royal ladies.' 'Well, let him come now,' said the king. He went as he was bidden and returned straightway with his charge.

Meroebus was a tall and proper youth, at that time just coming to man's estate, for he was seventeen years

old and taller than any other who was there, and had a comely crew of goodly fellows who waited upon him, and the Ethiopian army with great admiration and reverence made him ready way. Nor did Hydaspes tarry in his seat, but arose to meet him, and embraced him with a fatherly affection, and set him beside him, and taking him by the right hand said : ‘ My son, you come in good time ; for beside celebrating this solemn sacrifice with me for my victory you shall be royally married. Our gods and heroes, the founders of our race, have provided me with a daughter who shall belike be your wife. But of the secrencies thereof you shall know hereafter : now tell me if you wish to do aught for the people under your dominion.’ Meroebus, when he heard mention of a wife, what for joy and shame, could not hide himself in his black colour, so that men did not see he blushed. A red glow, like fire on embers, spread over his cheeks, and after he had stayed awhile he said : ‘ Father, the other legates that come will give you of the most precious things that grow in their countries to honour your glorious victory. But I, because you have been valiant in battle and declared your excellent manhood in noble exploits, have thought it good to give you a gift like therewith. I bring you therefore a man so well practised in blood-shed and war that none can be found to face him, so sturdy in wrestling and in fighting with plummets of lead and in all manner of other exercises that no man is able to withstand his strength.’ Therewith he bade the man come forth. He stepped out and did obeisance to Hydaspes, and was of such stature, being a man of the old making, that when he stooped to kiss the king’s knee he was as high almost as those who sat upon their raised chairs. This done, he waited not for command but put off his apparel and

stood naked, and made challenge against all that would come, either with weapon or with hand. After none came forth, though diverse proclamations were made, the king said : ‘ You shall have a gift from us like to yourself. And then he commanded to fetch an old elephant, which was very great. When the beast was brought, the man received it gladly, and the people suddenly fell in a great laughter, being well pleased with the king’s joke and somewhat comforted for their submission by this jest against his boastfulness.

After him came the ambassadors of the Seres, and brought to him two garments, one purple and the other white, the yarn whereof was spun by the spiders that breed in their country. When their gifts were received, and they had begged the king that such of their countrymen as were condemned in his prison might be delivered, and had obtained their suit, the ambassadors of Arabia Felix came and offered to him odoriferous leaves of casia and cinnamon and other sweet scents that grow in Arabia, worth many talents, so that all the place was filled with their fragrance. After them came men of Troglodytis bringing powdered gold and a pair of gryphons harnessed in golden reins. Then came the embassy of the Blemmyes, who carried bows and arrows made of dragon’s bones entwined in a wreath, and said : ‘ We bring you, O king, such gifts as are not in value equal to the others, but there was good account made of them, as you can say yourself, in the battle at the river against the Persians.’ ‘ They are more worth than others of greater price,’ quoth Hydaspes, ‘ for they are the cause why the others are brought to us : ’ and then he bade them tell him what they requested. They desired that they might have their tribute abated, and he released them from it altogether for fourteen years.

This done, when almost all who came on embassy had been seen and were as well or better rewarded than their gifts deserved, last there came the legates of the Axiomitae, who paid no tribute but were his allies and confederates. Wherefore they rejoiced with him in his prosperity, and brought him gifts also, among others a beast of wonderful and rare nature as big as a camel. The colour of his skin was spotted as a leopard and though his hind quarters drooped lion-like, yet his shoulders, forefeet and breast rose high, far beyond the proportion of his other limbs. His neck was slender, and although the rest of his body was great, his throat was long and thin like a swan. His head was after a camel's fashion and in size about twice as big as a Libyan ostrich, wherein he rolled his eyes terribly as though they were coloured beneath with red. In his gait he went like no beast either of the earth or water, but moved his legs on either side both at once, so that he moved his right legs and left legs not in order nor one after the other, but all his half body with either of them. He was so tame and gentle to move that he was guided by his keeper with a little cord, and obeyed his will as though it were a chain that could not be broken.

As soon as the beast was brought in it filled all the people with amazement and from the fashion of the principal parts of its body they gave it at once the name of camelopard. Moreover it threw all the gathering into confusion : for this is what befell. At the altar of the Moon stood two bullocks, and at the altar of the Sun four white horses ready to be sacrificed. When this monstrous strange foreign creature appeared they were as sore troubled and afraid as if they had seen a spirit, and the one of the two bulls who, it seems,

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

saw him, and two of the horses, broke away from those that held them, and ran about as fast as they could. They could not break out of the compass of the army, because the soldiers with their shields had made as it were a wall round, but they ran here and there and overthrew all that came in their way, pots and pans and living creatures, so that there was a great shouting partly for fear from those on whom they came down, partly for joy and pleasure that others had to see them run over their mates and tread them under their feet. Wherefore Persina and Chariclea could not be quiet in their tabernacle, but drew aside the curtain to see what was being done. Then Theagenes, either moved by his own manly courage or else stirred by an impulse from heaven, when he saw his keepers dispersed here and there in the tumult, started up suddenly—for before he kneeled at the altar and expected every minute to be slain—and took a cleft stick, whereof there lay a great many upon the altar, and leapt upon one of the horses that had not broken loose, and holding him by the mane instead of a bridle, and with his heels and the cleft stick making him to go, followed after the bull. At first every man thought that Theagenes was seeking to escape and they called one to the other not to let him go out from the compass of the soldiers. But by what he did next they learned that his was no act of cowardice to avoid the sacrifice. For when he had very quickly overtaken the bull, at first he drove him forward from behind, goading and stirring him on to a faster speed, following wherever he went and carefully avoiding his short turns so that they hurt him not. Then, after he had made the bull familiar with the sight of him and what he did, he rode his horse close to his side, so near that their skins touched and

their breath and sweat were mingled together, and he kept them to such an equal course that those who were afar off deemed that their heads were joined together, and commended Theagenes to the heavens who had so strangely yoked a horse and a bull at one. The people looked in wonder, but when Chariclea saw it she trembled and quaked, because she knew not what he meant to do and was as sore afraid of any hurt to him as if she should have been slain herself. Persina espied her and said : ‘ Daughter, what ailest thou ? Thou seemest to be in every danger that this stranger is in. Truly I myself am somewhat moved and have pity for his youth, and I pray that he escape this peril and be kept for sacrifice, so that the service of the gods may not be altogether imperfect and neglected by us.’ ‘ That is a jest indeed,’ said Chariclea, ‘ to wish that he may not die so that he may not live. If you can, mother, save the man and do me a pleasure.’ Persina, not suspecting the truth but thinking she was a little in love with him, said : ‘ It is not possible to save him ; but be not afraid to tell thy mother what acquaintance thou hast with him that thou shouldest be so very anxious on his behalf. For though it be a youthful motion and scarce seemly for a maiden, a mother’s nature knows how to conceal her daughter’s weakness, and one woman another’s plight, because perhaps they have the same feelings.’ Thereat Chariclea wept very sorrowfully and said : ‘ In this point above all am I unhappy, because even those that have understanding understand not my words, and when I tell them of my troubles they think that there is naught in my tale. So now I am forced to tell the bare truth and to accuse myself openly.’

As she said thus and was about to tell her the matter truly, she was stopped by a great cry of the

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

people again. For Theagenes, after he had let his horse run as fast as he could till his breast was level with the bull's head, allowed him to go at liberty, and leaping flung himself upon the bull's head between his horns, and cast his arms about it like a garland, and clasped his fingers on his forehead in front, and let the rest of his body hang down by his right shoulder. So hanging he was carried along, moving lightly with the bull's leaps, and at length, when he perceived that he was weary with the burden and his muscles faint with too much straining, coming to the place where Hydaspes sat, he pulled his head sideways, and putting his own feet in front of the bull's legs, while he pawed the ground with his hoofs, he made him stand still. The bull, being thus hindered in his course and overcome by the youth's strength, fell down upon his head and shoulders, so that his horns stuck so fast in the ground that he could not move his head, and his feet stood upward, wherewith he sprawled in vain a great while and by his feebleness declared that he was overcome. Theagenes pressed him down, holding him with his left arm, while he lifted his right hand to heaven and looked merrily at Hydaspes and all who were there, by his smiling face inviting them to share in his triumph, whose famousness was declared by the bull's bellowing as well as if it had been declared by a trumpet. The noise was re-echoed by the people's shouting, who said nothing plainly in his praise but with wide throats and gaping mouths raised for a great while shouts of wonder to heaven. By Hydaspes' command the servants ran and some brought Theagenes to him and others tied ropes about the bull's horns, and took him with the horse, and fastened them to the altars again. Hydaspes was about to say somewhat to Theagenes, but the

people, delighted with the young man, and singularly well minded to him ever since they saw him first, and marvelling at his strength, but even more for spite they had toward Meroebus' Ethiopian champion, cried with one voice : ' Let this fellow be matched with Meroebus' man : let him that received the elephant contend with him that overcame the bull.' As they were very instant, Hydaspes agreed and the Ethiopian was brought forth straightway, who looked proudly and fiercely about him and with slow steps shook his elbows broadways in very insolent fashion.

When he had come near to the king's seat, Hydaspes looked at Theagenes and said in Greek : ' Stranger, the people bid that you contend with this fellow.' ' I am pleased to do as they will have me,' said Theagenes ; ' but in what fashion must we be matched ? ' ' In wrestling,' quoth Hydaspes. ' Why should we not rather fight with swords ? ' said he. ' Then either I might do some glorious deed or else in death be slain and so content Chariclea, who till now hath endured to conceal our estate or rather given me my last farewell.' ' What you mean by this talk of Chariclea,' said Hydaspes, ' I know not. But you must wrestle and not fight with swords, because it is not lawful to see any blood shed before the time of sacrifice.' Then Theagenes perceived that Hydaspes feared lest he should be slain before the offering, and said : ' You do well to keep me for the gods, and they will have regard for me.' So first he took dust and cast it upon his arms and shoulders, that were yet sweaty with chasing the bull, and shook that off which stuck not fast to his body. Then he stretched out both his arms and got a firm footing for his feet, and bending his knees and bowing his back inclined his neck forward with body taut awaiting for

the grip at the close. The Ethiopian seeing him laughed scornfully and with disdainful gestures seemed to mock his adversary and ran suddenly forward and with his elbow hit Theagenes in the neck, as sore as if he had stricken him with a bar, and then drew back and laughed again at his own foolish conceit. But Theagenes, like a man from his cradle brought up in wrestling and thoroughly instructed in Mercury's art, thought it good to give way at first and make trial of his adversary's strength, and not to withstand so rude a violence, but by art to delude the same. Therefore he stooped lower, and made semblance as though he had been very sorrowful, and laid the other side of his neck to receive the next blow, and when the Ethiopian struck gave way, and feigned to fall flat upon his face. The Ethiopian was now full of courage and despised his enemy and came on for the third time unadvisedly and prepared to strike him with his elbow again. But Theagenes avoiding his attack stooped and suddenly gripped him, pinning his left arm with his right elbow, and thus held fast made him bend forward, inasmuch as because of his vain blow he was already inclining to the ground. Next getting him under the armpits and with much ado twining his hands about his back and great gorbelly, he forced him off his feet by working his heel over his ankles and compelled him to sink on to his knees. Then he straddled over him and driving his legs apart with his feet he knocked away the Ethiopians wrists, wherewith he stayed himself from the ground, and bringing his forearms tight about his forehead and straining backwards constrained him to lay his belly flat upon the earth.

Thereat the people gave a greater shout than they did before, and the king himself could stay no longer, but started from his seat and said : ‘ O hateful

necessity. What a man is this which our law compels us to kill !' Then calling him unto him he said : ' Young sir, naught remains now but that thou be crowned before the sacrifice. Take then the crown for this thy glorious victory, although it be one unprofitable and lasting but for the day. I cannot deliver thee from thy fate though I would, but I will do for thee all that I may without breach of the laws. If thou knowest anything wherewith I can please thee while yet thou livest, ask and thou shalt have it.' And therewith he put a crown of gold and jewels upon Theagenes' head, and many men did see him weep.

Theagenes said : ' Then I require you to let me obtain this request at your hand according as you have promised. If there be no way to escape this sacrifice command me to be killed by the hand of her who to-day was found to be your daughter.' Hydaspes was bitten by this word and recalled Chariclea's request, which was like to this. But he judged it of no matter at that pressing time to consider it narrowly, and said : ' Stranger, I bade thee ask somewhat that might be granted, and promised to perform it. But the law exactly ordains that she who makes the sacrifice should have a husband.' ' Chariclea hath a husband' said Theagenes. ' This man is mad,' Hydaspes cried, ' and in truth giveth himself over to death. The fire declared that she was a maid unmarried who never had to do with a man : unless indeed you mean Meroebus here—I cannot tell how you should come by knowledge thereof—who is not yet her husband, although I have promised her to him.' ' You may add that he is not likely to be,' said Theagenes, ' if I know anything of Chariclea's mind. And since I am a sacrifice it is only right to believe me when I prophecy.' ' Good sir,' said Meroebus,

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

sacrifices by their entrails do tell soothsayers of the future, not when they are alive but when they are killed and cut up. Wherefore, father, you said well that this stranger craved for death. Let some one, if you will, take him to the altar, and when you have dispatched any matter still left, do you perform the sacrifice.'

So Theagenes was carried to the place appointed, and Chariclea, who had been comforted a little by his victory and hoped for better fortune, when she saw him led away was sunk again in grief. Persina tried to comfort her in divers ways and told her that it was likely the young man might be saved, if only she would tell more plainly what remained of her story. Chariclea saw that the time would permit her to delay no longer, and prepared in haste to show to her the chief and principal points. But meanwhile, Hydaspes asking if there were any more come on embassy, Harmonias answered : 'None save the people of Syene who have come but now, bringing with other presents a letter from Oroondates.' 'Let them approach' said Hydaspes. And so they came and delivered the letter which he opened and read : the contents whereof were these :

'To Hydaspes the gentle and fortunate king of the Ethiopians Oroondates the great king's governor sendeth greeting. Inasmuch as having overcome me in battle you overcame me even more in greatness of mind, and of your courtesy restored to me my governorship, I shall think it no marvel if you perform a small request for me now. There was a certain maid who in carriage from Memphis happened by chance of war to fall into your hands, and I was told by those who were with her and escaped that you commanded her to be carried captive to Ethiopia. This wench I beg

you to send me, both because I desire her myself and especially since for her father's sake I would see her safe kept. He hath travelled far for her, and in his seeking was taken prisoner in this time of war by my soldiers who lay in garrison at Elephantina. I saw him there when I held review of those that escaped from the battle, and he desired that he might be sent to ask your clemency. You will find him with my present embassy, a man who by his manners alone declareth that he is a gentleman, and by his countenance sheweth that he is worthy to obtain his desire at your hand. Send him back to me, O king, rejoicing, a father not merely in name but in truth.'

When Hydaspes had read the letter he asked which of these men is he who seeketh for his daughter. They showed him a certain old man, to whom he said : ' Stranger, I will gladly do anything that Oroöndates requests. I commanded ten captive maidens only to be brought here. One of them is known not to be thine. But for the rest, look upon them all, and if thou canst find thy daughter take her back with thee.' The old man fell down and kissed his feet ; but after he had looked upon them all as they were brought before him and found her not whom he sought, he was very sad, and said : ' None of these, O king, is she.' ' You know,' quoth Hydaspes, ' there is no want of good will in me. If you find her not whom you seek for, you must blame fortune. I give you leave to make yourself sure that there are no other maidens here beside these nor yet in the tents.'

The old man beat his brow and wept and then lifting up his head and looking at the multitude around him, he suddenly ran forward as though he had been mad. When he came to the altars he wound his

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

cloak like a rope—for he had a cloak on by chance—and cast it about Theagenes' neck, and cried so that all men might hear : ‘ I have found thee, mine enemy : I have gotten thee, thou mischievous and accursed fellow.’ The keepers would have stayed him and plucked him away, but he held so fast that at last he prevailed upon them to bring him before Hydaspes and the council. There he spake thus : ‘ This man, O king, is he who like a thief took my daughter from me : this is he who hath made my house desolate and without a child : this is he who took my dearest heart even from the altars of Apollo : and yet he sitteth now at the altars of your gods like a good and devout man.’ All that were there were moved, and though they understood not his words they marvelled greatly at his doings.

Then did Hydaspes bid him tell more plainly what he wished ; and the old man—who was Charicles—concealing the truth of Chariclea—for he feared lest if she had lost her maidenhood in her flight he would have much ado with her true parents—told briefly what was little hurtful to him, in this fashion. ‘ I had a daughter, O king. How wise she was and withal how fair, only if you had seen her would you believe. She led her life in virginity and was one of Diana’s priests at Delphi. This maid this jolly Thessalian stole away from Apollo’s temple, having come to Delphi, my native city, as captain of a holy embassy to celebrate a certain feast. Wherefore we may deem that he hath offended also against you, for he hath sinned against your god Apollo, who is one with the Sun and defiled his temple. Furthermore a false priest of Memphis was his companion in doing this shameful and heinous deed. After I had been to Thessaly and required this fellow from the people of

Oeta, and they were all content that he should be slain wherever he was as a common plague of all their country, not finding him there I went to Memphis, which I deemed to be a place whither Calasiris would go for diverse reasons. When I came there I found him dead, as well he had deserved, and was told by his son Thyamis of all that belonged to my daughter, and how she had been sent to Syene to Oroöndates. I went thither too, and not finding Oroöndates, was taken prisoner at Elephantina, whence at this present I come in humble sort to seek my daughter ; and you will do me, unhappy man, a good turn and a deed well beseeeming a king, if you will accept the governor's request made on my behalf.' Thereat he held his peace and wept bitterly to confirm what he said.

Hydaspes turned to Theagenes and said : ' What answer have you to this ? ' Theagenes replied : ' All that he hath laid against me in this accusation is true : as touching him I am the thief, the unjust man, and the robber : yet have I done you a good turn.' ' Restore then that which is not yours,' said Hydaspes ; ' you are consecrated to the gods and your death shall be a glorious sacrifice rather than the just punishment for your misdeeds.' ' Nay,' quoth Theagenes, ' not he that did the wrong but he that hath the benefit of it ought to make restitution. Seeing then that you have her, restore her ; unless indeed this man also shall acknowledge that Chariclea is your daughter.' Then no man could contain himself and everywhere was confusion. Sisimithres had known a good while all that was being said and done, but he had waited until every thing should be plainly revealed by God. Now he came forward and embracing Charicles said : ' Your adopted daughter whom I once delivered to you is safe and found to be

the daughter of those whom you yourself well know.'

Chariclea also ran out of the tabernacle like a mad woman, without regard to what became her sex and age, and fell at Charicles' knees and said : ' O father, no less dear to me than those who begat me, take what revenge you will for my unnatural sin, without any regard to the excuse that some man might allege, that this is all the gods' will and their doing.' Persina on the other side kissed Hydaspes and said : ' Husband, be sure that this is so, and know that this young Greek is indeed your daughter's husband, for she has just now at last told me all her tale.' The people on their side rejoiced and danced for gladness, and with one consent exulted in what was done ; marry they understood not everything but inferred the truth from what had already befallen Chariclea. Perhaps also they were moved to understand by inspiration of the gods, whose will it was that all this should turn out like a play upon the stage. In truth they made very contrary things agree, sorrow and mirth, tears and laughter : fear and terror were turned into a merry banquet at the end : such as were sorrowful rejoiced, finding what they sought not for, and losing what they hoped to find : to be short, the cruel slaughters that were looked for every moment were turned into holy sacrifices.

Then said Hydaspes to Sisimithres : ' Right wise man, what must we do ? To deny the gods their sacrifice is an impious thing : yet we may not rightly offer those whom the gods themselves have given us. We must bethink ourselves what is best to do.' Thereupon Sisimithres answered, not in Greek but in the Ethiopian tongue that all might understand, thus : ' O king, it seems that too great joy blinds the eyes even of the wisest among men. You might

have perceived long ago that the gods liked not the sacrifice you prepared them, who have now at the very altars declared that happy Chariclea is your daughter, and brought him who reared her, as of set intent, from the midst of Greece hither. They sent fear and panic too upon the horses and bulls that stood before altars, declaring thereby that the greater sacrifices which were used among our ancestors should cease now and be done no more. And as the end and happy conclusion of this comedy they have revealed now that this young Greek is the maid's husband. Let us therefore take to our hearts the wondrous works that the gods have done, and be helpers of their will, and do only righteous sacrifices to them, and leave the murdering of men and women for ever hereafter.'

When Sisimithres had said this loud enough for all to hear, Hydaspes, who understood also the native tongue, took Theagenes and Chariclea by the hand and said : ' Seeing that these things be thus appointed by the will and pleasure of the gods, I think—how seemeth it to you who be here also ?—that it is not good to strive against them. Wherefore before them who have preordained this, and before you also who show that you agree, I wish that these two young folks may increase and grow in wedlock and give them leave to rejoice one the other, that they may engender and have children. And if you shall think it good, let this decree be confirmed with sacrifice, and let us fall now to worshipping of the gods.' The army consented thereto and with clapping of their hands gave a sign that they were contented with the match.

Hydaspes then came to the altars and being ready now to begin sacrifice said : ' O Sun our lord, and lady Moon, forasmuch as Theagenes and Chariclea are

MARRIAGE OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA

declared man and wife by your good will, you will surely accept their offerings and suffer them to do sacrifice to you.' This said, he took off his own mitre and Persina's, which were the signs of their priesthood, and set one which was his own upon Theagenes' head and the other that was Persina's upon the head of Chariclea. When this was done Charicles remembered the oracle's answer at Delphi, and saw that now that was fulfilled indeed which was promised before by the gods. Which was that after they fled from Delphi they should come at length to country scorched.

*'With burning Phoebus beams.
Where they as recompenses due
That virtues rare do gain
In time to come ere it be long,
White mitres shall obtain.'*

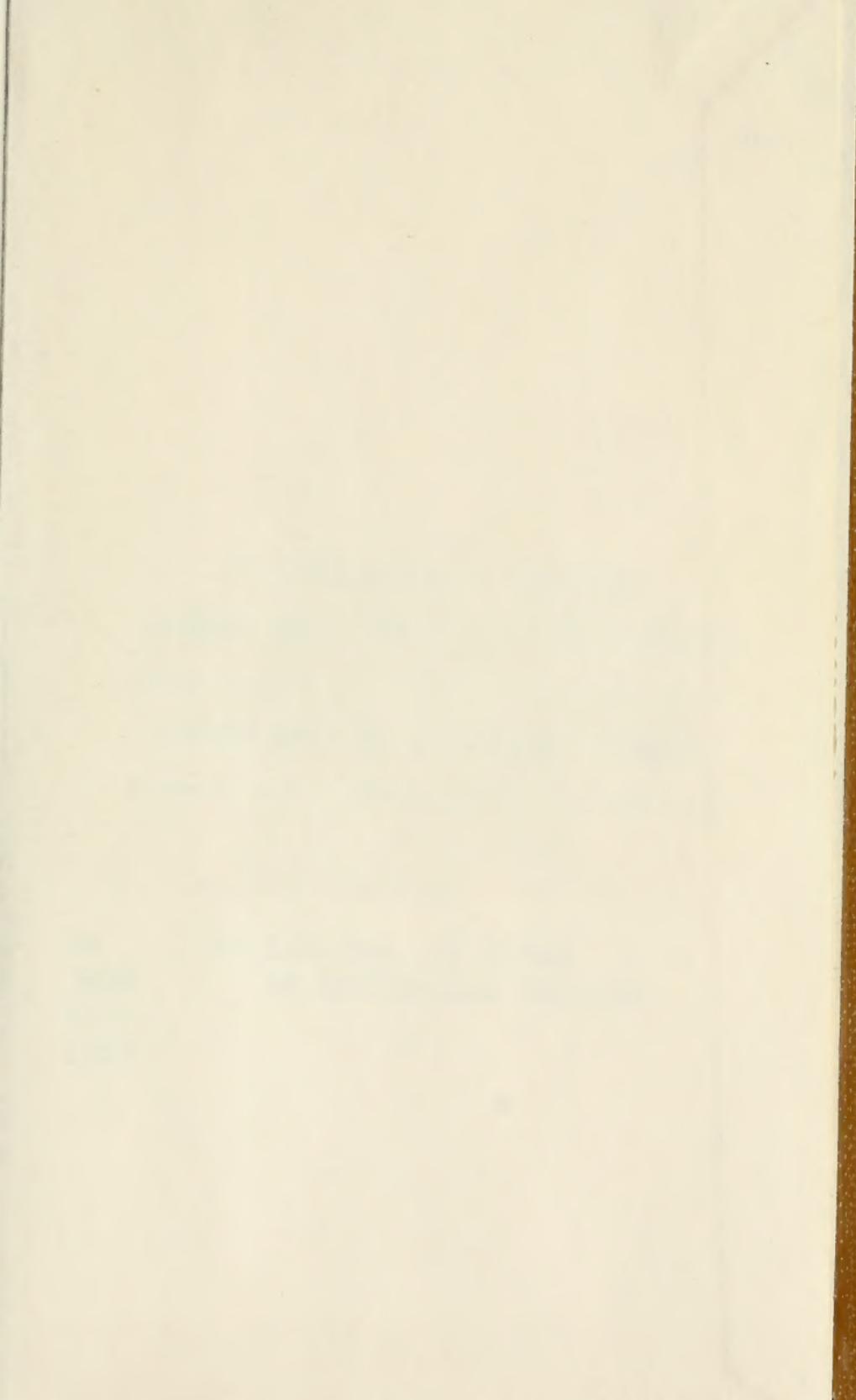
Thus after they had put on these white mitres and were made priests by the voice and judgment of Hydaspes and had duly done sacrifice, they rode away in chariots drawn by horses, Hydaspes and Theagenes in one, Sisimithres and Charicles in another, and Persina with Chariclea in the third drawn by two white oxen, with great joy and burning torches and melody of instruments of music. And so they came to Meroe that the secreter affairs of wedlock might be accomplished with greater pomp in that city.

HERE ENDETH
THE ETHIOPIAN HISTORY OF THEAGENES AND CHARICLEA
THE AUTHOR WHEREOF IS HELIODORUS OF EMESUS
A CITY OF PHOENICIA, SON OF THEODOSIUS
WHO FETCHED HIS PEDIGREE
FROM THE SUN.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF HELIODORUS









45-

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

PA Heliodorus, of Emesa
3998 An Aethiopian romance
H2E5
1923

